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Chair: Mr. Saikal ..... (Afghanistan)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 28: Social development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/73/214)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/73/61-E/2018/4, A/73/211/Rev.1, A/73/213, A/73/220 and A/73/254)

(c) Literacy for life: shaping future agendas (*continued*) (A/73/292)

1. **Mr. Edrees** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the continuing deliberations on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly had the same focus on trends in inequality within and among countries. Those discussions should be action-oriented, to implement the objectives of the World Summit and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Member States should also address the particular needs of Africa and least developed countries and highlight the situation and specific needs of young people, older persons, persons with disabilities, families and indigenous peoples.

2. The Group was deeply concerned about the uneven progress achieved in fulfilling the interrelated commitments made at the World Summit and by the lack of satisfactory progress of social development. The Group reaffirmed its commitment to working towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions and building on the achievements of, and lessons learned from, the Millennium Development Goals.

3. International development cooperation, especially North-South cooperation, remained a fundamental catalyst for sustainable development and, most importantly, in promoting the Programme of Action of the World Summit. The international community must uphold the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and push for North-South cooperation, as the main channel for development financing, to continue to play its key role. Developed countries were urged to fulfil their unmet official development assistance commitments. South-South cooperation, however, was a collective endeavour of developing countries and its agenda should be driven by the countries of the South. As a complement to North-South cooperation, it deserved its own separate and independent promotion.

4. Addressing inequality in all its dimensions was essential to eradicating poverty, advancing social progress and achieving sustainable development. Despite the decline in global income inequality, income inequality between and within countries and regions had persisted and had even risen in many countries. Member States and the international community must learn from the experience of the countries that had successfully reduced both income and non-income inequalities and adopt the right mix of policies that had proved to be effective elsewhere, taking into consideration their unique national contexts.

5. In response to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the objectives of the International Year of the Family and its follow-up processes (A/73/61-E/2018/4), which indicated that some Member States had made efforts to strengthen existing institutions charged with the implementation of family policies, the Group invited Member States to invest in family-oriented policies and programmes as important tools for supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In addition, family-related research awareness-raising activities should be promoted at the national and regional levels. States must also take into account the realities of an ageing population in their efforts to eradicate poverty, and the international community must work together to ensure that the rights of older persons were upheld, while avoiding multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and adopting a holistic approach that recognized the growing need for affordable and high-quality long-term care.

6. The Group welcomed progress achieved in recent years by Governments and other stakeholders, including civil society organizations and the private sector, in mainstreaming disability issues into inclusive policies and programmes for the implementation of national development efforts and the 2030 Agenda and looked forward to seeing the United Nations 2018 flagship report on disability and development: realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities.

7. **Mr. Hilale** (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that addressing all dimensions of inequality was essential to eradicating poverty, advancing social progress and achieving sustainable development for all. Although many countries had shown remarkable economic progress over the past decade and a half, lifting millions out of extreme poverty and making education and health care available to more people, substantial digital divides and

inequalities persisted between countries and regions and between developed and developing countries. The general developmental crisis in Africa had not been fundamentally altered, and African countries remained at the bottom of any list measuring social development and economic activity, in part because of economic, financial and food-related crises, climate change, civil strife, conflicts and HIV and AIDS pandemics. The Group was committed to improving State financing to strengthen national health systems and called for continuing support from the international community to boost African economies and promote sustainable development.

8. Although there was no one-size-fits-all approach, the international community could implement general strategies to prevent the rise of national and global inequality by fostering inclusive and sustainable growth; boosting economic growth and social equity; providing the workforce with education and skills development; promoting the integration of those in vulnerable situations; and creating an enabling environment for business investment, entrepreneurship and donor support. The gender perspective should be systematically considered and integrated into inclusive sustainable development policies to help women to achieve their full potential.

9. Despite advances in certain areas, more needed to be done to accelerate progress. In that regard, the 2030 Agenda, through its people-centred and integrated approach, including a particular commitment to the empowerment of vulnerable and disadvantaged people, its emphasis on leaving no one behind and its calls for collaborative partnerships among all countries and stakeholders in implementing an ambitious plan of action, provided an important milestone for achieving equality and equity for all. All stakeholders would have to refocus and intensify their efforts on areas where progress had been slow. Implementing Sustainable Development Goal 17, which would bring together the international community, civil society, the private sector and other actors, was key to accelerating efforts towards achieving all the other Goals and ensuring that no one was left behind.

10. Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want presented a vision of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena" to ensure positive socioeconomic transformation within 50 years of its endorsement by the African Union, and contained a roadmap for achieving that vision, in which States members of the African Union were encouraged to promote equality and equity through sustainable development, good governance, democracy and the rule of law. The first of seven aspirations outlined in Agenda 2063 was for a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development. Emphasis was placed on the need to empower all people, including those living in vulnerable situations, through inclusive growth that created decent jobs and improved access to social protection and through measures to ensure that no individual remained below the poverty line. The Group reaffirmed its commitment to improved social development and reduced inequalities among people in Africa. It appealed to its partners and the international community to continue to support the efforts of the African States towards achieving those endeavours.

11. **Mr. Richardson** (Saint Lucia), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that, despite the challenges arising from the vulnerabilities faced by CARICOM member States as small island developing States, the Community remained fully committed to improving the well-being of its people and enabling them to attain their highest potential in order to build more resilient societies, regardless of hurdles encountered along the path to full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

12. Building social resilience continued to be pivotal for the growth and development of the region. Through a strategic plan covering the period 2015–2019, CARICOM would continue to focus on three key areas: advancing initiatives for health and wellness; advancing human capital development; and enhancing citizen security and justice. Mindful of the correlation between good health and economic growth, CARICOM welcomed the recent convening of two high-level meetings, one on tuberculosis and another on non-communicable diseases, which were among the leading causes of death in the region. In that regard, CARICOM had launched an initiative called Caribbean Moves designed to move people towards healthier lifestyles. It was part of a regional approach to tackling non-communicable diseases that included making national health promotion programmes more comprehensive, effective, equitable and sustainable, in part through new communication techniques to motivate and engage persons of all ages, especially young people.

13. CARICOM was committed to using a multidimensional approach to reduce the inequality gap and continued to strive to provide greater access to quality education, so that people could acquire the necessary skills and competencies and be prepared for current societal and workplace demands. To that end, CARICOM worked assiduously to implement its human resource development strategy for 2030, aimed at contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 4, with a focus

on the development of the whole person, including education for all stages of life.

14. Recognizing the role of youth as pivotal to building more resilient societies and the role of volunteerism in empowering talented and inspirational young people, CARICOM reaffirmed its full commitment to strengthening existing youth policies that would empower future generations and welcomed the collaboration between United Nations agencies and regional institutions in convening the Caribbean Forum on Population, Youth and Development, held in Guyana in July 2018. The Forum served to promote youth engagement on key developmental processes, including the Sustainable Development Goals, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development.

15. The Community recognized the importance of adequately addressing the specific needs of the steadily ageing population in the Caribbean, in particular with regard to long-term care, mindful of the contributions made by older persons during their productive lives. Given the link between ageing and non-communicable diseases and the importance of ensuring that the relevant policies and protection mechanisms were in place, CARICOM welcomed the progress made in bringing greater attention to the question of ageing. It also welcomed the progress made in addressing the challenges faced by persons with disabilities and in facilitating their participation in fulfilment of the Goals.

16. The Caribbean region was vulnerable to the ravages of more intense, frequent and catastrophic storms as a result of climate change, and one storm could erase all previous gains, thus further widening the inequality gap. It was therefore imperative to continue to build resilience so as to preserve the infrastructure, resources and way of life of the region. Recalling the legacy of Nelson Mandela and his address to the World Summit in 1995, CARICOM reiterated its commitment to the principle of inclusion. The States members would continue to work together, within the region and with the rest of the international community, to ensure that their peoples and all peoples could attain their highest potential and that no one would be left behind.

17. **Ms. Scott** (Namibia), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said that the theme endorsed for the 2018/19 period by the thirty-eighth ordinary summit of SADC Heads of State and Government, "Promoting Infrastructure Development and Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development", represented a clear call for youth to be placed at the forefront of efforts relating to the Community's industrialization agenda, directing the focus of member States to infrastructure development, youth empowerment and sustainable development. At a recent meeting, the SADC ministers of information and communication technologies had discussed plans to promote interconnectivity in the region, a key target that would ensure access to information and, consequently, promote sustainable development. SADC had also approved the operationalization of the SADC University of Transformation, which would support that agenda through entrepreneurship, innovation, commercialization, technology transfer, enterprise development and the digital and knowledge economy. The establishment of the University was consistent with the Secretary-General's recommendation to leverage science, technology and innovation for inclusive and sustainable development. Young people had a key role in building those skills and in establishing aligned economies.

18. Noting the widespread inequality highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/73/214), SADC remained concerned about the impact of the current global financial crisis and the unequal distribution of wealth. As inequality in all its aspects affected the most marginalized people, efforts to alleviate poverty must include efficient, sustainable and effective social policies. SADC member States therefore continued to implement the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan for the period 2005–2020, striving to accelerate poverty eradication and the attainment of other development goals, including combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and achieving gender equality and sustainable development.

19. The SADC region remained on the frontlines of climate change, in particular with regard to the impact on food security. In view of the overall food decline during the period 2017/18, member States were wary of the likely effects of El Niño-induced conditions for the 2018/19 cropping season and were developing contingency plans to enhance drought preparedness. Vulnerability assessment measures were being undertaken by member States under the SADC Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Programme, with best practices being shared and joint measures taken in anticipation of any further food insecurity situations. SADC member States were greatly appreciative of assistance from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other agencies and were committed to working with all partners on shoring up disaster preparedness programmes.

20. **Mr. Yaakob** (Malaysia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that globalization was shaping a new era of interaction between countries, economies and peoples and that, while that increased contact brought enormous positive opportunities, it also led to repercussions for different groups of people. Social development had always been a priority for ASEAN, as outlined in many of its documents and reflected in its various regional instruments and mechanisms.

21. In aiming to build a community of cohesive, equitable and harmonious societies, ASEAN member States strived to provide access to opportunities by rising above the barriers of religion, race, language, gender and social and cultural background, nurturing human potential to the fullest and upholding social justice. Efforts such as reducing poverty, building decent and safe communities, providing care for older persons, facilitating universal access to education and skills-development, promoting the welfare of children and protecting them from abuse and empowering marginalized citizens to move forward with confidence and dignity brought long-term economic benefits and created a more stable international political and economic environment. To that end, ASEAN aligned its work not only with its own instruments, but also with its ongoing efforts to build an inclusive community that promoted a high quality of life, equitable access to opportunities and the protection of human rights.

22. The ASEAN community would continue to play an active role in socioeconomic development at the national, regional, and international levels, with the social development agenda an integral part of its economic, political, security-related and sociocultural work. ASEAN looked forward to engaging with the United Nations and its agencies, as well as other potential partners in working towards a more prosperous and inclusive global community. It welcomed collaboration with the United Nations, individual Member States and other partners to support social development issues in the region and work towards achieving the 2030 Agenda.

23. **Ms. Fitzgibbon** (European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth held in Gothenburg, Sweden, in 2017 had provided a unique opportunity for promoting social development in the European Union. The European Pillar of Social Rights, which had been announced at the Summit, would serve as a compass for convergence towards better working and living conditions in the European Union. It would focus on 20 principles in three main areas: equal opportunities and access to the labour market, fair working conditions, and social protection and social inclusion. The Pillar would also provide the main guidance for implementing the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals in the European Union.

24. Social protection systems were strained on account of demography, as expenditure on health care, pensions and long-term care was growing, while financing was diminishing, owing to a shrinking workforce. Over the next decade, updating the model of social protection could prove to be the greatest structural challenge in Europe. The European Commission had proposed guidance on adapting social protection systems to the changing world of work and better protecting people in non-standard work and self-employment.

25. Adult learning was increasingly important, as even the most basic tasks in the future economy would require a broader set of digital, service and people-oriented skills. The New Skills Agenda for Europe provided a framework to make such a shift and to reduce inequalities in the labour market by ensuring that people had the skills they needed. The Youth Guarantee programme, which offered all young people under the age of 25 years an offer of employment, apprenticeship or education, had provided opportunities to more than 3.5 million people each year since 2014. Another 2.4 million had received direct support from the Youth Employment Initiative, the main financial resource for implementation of the programme. Although youth unemployment was at its lowest level since 2000, further efforts would be needed to reach those who had fewer opportunities. In that connection, the European Solidarity Corps, a new initiative, offered socially minded young people the opportunity to work or volunteer in the European Union or abroad in areas such as education, health care, social integration, working with vulnerable groups, and environmental protection.

26. In view of the challenges of balancing work and family life, solutions should be found to give all people a real choice in how they wanted to shape their lives. Women's increased participation in the labour market would reduce the gender gap in employment, which remained above 11 per cent. In the interest of reducing the gender pay gap, the Commission had made a recommendation in 2014 and the European Union had adopted an action plan for 2017–2019. The Commission was encouraging an equal distribution of caregiving and household responsibilities between women and men,

and an initiative on work-life balance had been designed to help caregivers. The initiative included a proposal for a directive on parental, paternity and carer's leave and other policy guidance to reduce economic disincentives for women to work.

27. Unfortunately, persons with disabilities in the European Union continued to be underrepresented in employment and in tertiary education. As a party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the European Union continued to mainstream disability issues in its actions to combat unemployment and was working towards the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in society. The European Union disability strategy for 2010–2020 would be revised in order to take stock of the implementation of the Convention and to assess the effectiveness of the strategy. Progress continued to be made towards the adoption of a European Accessibility Act, which would harmonize accessibility requirements in the European Union.

28. The European Consensus on Development would be a key instrument for supporting social development globally, as it was designed to support the achievement of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals in an integrated manner. According to the Consensus, the European Union and its member States would promote gender equality and a human rights-based approach to development. The European Union also intended to work more effectively with all partners, including with States at all stages of development. It would continue to target its assistance to the least-developed and conflict-affected countries, while also strengthening its partnerships with middle-income States, which would be critical for implementing the 2030 Agenda and addressing social development and rising inequalities within countries. Working towards the Sustainable Development Goals would necessitate broad partnerships with various stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society organizations and academia.

29. **Mr. Skinner-Kleé Arenales** (Guatemala), speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends of Older Persons, said that the demographic trend of ageing societies posed new challenges to development. Societies should be able to benefit from the meaningful contributions made by older persons, and policies should be designed to promote social inclusion, intergenerational solidarity and the full and effective enjoyment of the human rights and dignity of older persons. Older persons should be not only recipients of special care and social protection, but also active agents and beneficiaries of change.

30. One of the most pressing challenges to the welfare of older persons was poverty and the related difficulties. Nevertheless, older persons were often called upon to provide for the household and care for other family members. Programmes, policies and adequate legal frameworks should be designed to provide for the full social inclusion and participation of older persons, free from all forms of discrimination and violence. Such action would support their dignity, empowerment and ability to fully enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms and contribute to development, which was the key to successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the 2002 Madrid Political Declaration and a response to the challenges and opportunities of ageing in the twenty-first century.

31. A rights-based perspective on ageing must have a place in the policy approaches of every State to ensure inclusive social development. The Group invited all relevant actors to promote such a perspective at various levels. Although implementation of the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing could have positive implications for the enjoyment of some rights by older persons, the Plan of Action was a non-legally binding instrument that addressed ageing issues from a developmental perspective and did not comprehensively address gaps in protection. Furthermore, the progress of implementation was uneven and gaps between policy and practice remained.

32. Nevertheless, the collective efforts of the international community could achieve sustainable and adequate social and economic policies for older persons. Countries must work together to ensure the well-being of older persons, address issues related to their social integration and protect their dignity and rights, leaving no one behind.

33. **Mr. Juntura** (Finland), speaking as a youth delegate, referred to his personal experience of anxiety, depression and mental illness. He said that, even in stable societies, less than half of the people who needed mental health services received the treatment they required. As youth made up a large part of that population, as well as a majority of the world population as a whole, there was an urgent need to pay attention to youth mental health. Sustainable peace could be achieved only through inclusiveness and meaningful participation of youth, women and civil society. Youth engagement also played an important role in countering violent extremist narratives and in conflict prevention.

34. Nevertheless, barriers to access to mental health services, powerful stigmas and discriminatory policies all posed obstacles, especially to vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, persons with disabilities, migrants

and the community of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and other persons. Action was needed to ensure their enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and to build socially cohesive communities.

35. An international mechanism for young peoples' rights should be established, and a holistic approach to ensuring the enjoyment of such rights should be adopted. The attitude that mental illness was a personal failure should change; the failure actually lay in societal responses to mental and brain disorders.

36. **Ms. Haas** (Austria), speaking as a youth delegate, said that she had travelled to different regions of her country and spoken with young people from all backgrounds. They were scared by the attempts to focus on differences rather than similarities, and were concerned by demagogy and the increasing polarization of societies. Such fears stemmed from both actual and perceived disparities in opportunities. While some differences were physically apparent, the differences very often included beliefs, socioeconomic backgrounds and opportunities. Many people experienced unjust or unfair treatment in one form or another because of the group to which they belonged. Despite the disparities in opportunities, and the multiple forms of discrimination, young people continued to demonstrate an extraordinary will to tackle the challenges that they faced.

37. Her country had been the first to allow voting from the age of 16 at all political levels, thereby offering more opportunities for youth to actively shape their surroundings. Young people had a desire to volunteer and cooperate regardless of ideological boundaries, and they offered creative and innovative ideas for reducing inequalities. Over half of Austrian youth was involved in voluntary activities. The Sustainable Development Goals had the potential to lead to a world based on the principles of freedom, equality and solidarity, which should be understood from a global and inclusive perspective with respect for universal human rights. Young people had a right to participate in decision-making at the international level, and it was important to reduce inequalities among them, so that the world could benefit from their contributions and diversity.

38. **Mr. Burri** (Switzerland) said that the 2030 Agenda encouraged the design of policies that considered the needs of future generations, including the global commitment to leave no one behind. Those concerned had not yet had their say, but the necessary resources could be provided. For instance, public funds could be saved by using insurance to compensate the unemployed or to ensure a sufficient income for older people. Where resources were limited, priority should be given to helping the most disadvantaged. Fighting poverty was a duty of justice and preventing it was a key issue for posterity. Social policies had an intrinsic sustainability dimension, especially when they concerned professional integration or reintegration, and youth employment was a political priority in Switzerland. In the absence of certainty about the needs of future generations, Member States should focus on the quality and sustainability of mechanisms to fight poverty and promote inclusion. At the same time, the Commission for Social Development played an essential role in addressing the underlying causes of poverty. The Commission commanded the attention of decision-makers, and its role had added value in the context of the 2030 agenda.

39. **Mr. Robert** (Switzerland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that cohesion was a fundamental component of any society that wished to develop peacefully, but could be achieved only by listening to all sectors of the population, particularly persons in vulnerable situations. Integration into the labour market was essential for young people and older workers alike, and their distinct challenges must be addressed in order to ensure intergenerational cohesion. Cohesion also called for tolerance, and the inclusion of minorities, especially migrant populations, made diversity a strength. Young people everywhere had opportunities for international mobility and many different paths and perspectives were open to them. Contacts between populations of different origins and different socioeconomic backgrounds were crucial, and exchanges between them helped to improve knowledge of "the other". Social diversity made it easier to form such links and diminished mistrust and unfamiliarity. Growing inequalities at the national and international levels threatened the balance and unity of communities, and it was the responsibility of every community to give each of its members the opportunity to be both a source of, and a stakeholder in, its development.

40. **Ms. Karugu** (Kenya) said that no country or region was immune to social and economic inequalities. The consequences of rising inequality were deprivation and continuous conflict, which led to unstoppable radicalization and violent extremism. The people-centred development approach of the 2030 Agenda was in line with the Kenya Vision 2030 development blueprint, which included social development as one of its four main pillars. The Government was bound by the Constitution to guarantee all Kenyans their economic, social and cultural rights, and to provide a social safety net to the underprivileged and their dependants. As a means of maintaining inclusive growth, government-funded social assistance, including cash transfer

programmes that assisted persons in vulnerable groups, had benefited over 1 million households.

41. Kenya was working towards universal health coverage for all citizens as part of its Big Four Agenda. The Government also aimed to increase food and nutrition security and the availability of enhanced affordable housing, and to expand the manufacturing base. The Agenda had been designed to benefit all of society and to improve the circumstances of women and youth, who tended to bear the brunt of societal inequities. The Government had reserved 30 per cent of all public tenders on works, goods and services exclusively for women, youth and persons with disabilities. In combination with various other initiatives, such as the Huduma Kenya programme, the economic and social conditions of hundreds of thousands of people had been improved and access to public services had increased.

42. **Ms. Bavdaž Kuret** (Slovenia), welcoming the theme of the International Day of Older Persons for 2018, said that her country respected and supported older human rights champions. Slovenia was among the most rapidly ageing countries in the European Union, and by 2030 more than 25 per cent of the population would be over the age of 65. Discussions on an integrated and comprehensive approach to long-term care were continuing in the country. A conference on end-of-life issues had been organized by the National Council and the Human Rights Ombudsperson in October 2017. A national exhibition entitled "Ageing: a society for all", displayed at various locations throughout 2018, had been designed to raise awareness of the serious challenges faced by older persons in exercising their human rights.

43. **Ms. Svetelj** (Slovenia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, although the overall level of life satisfaction among young people in her country was high, the lack of youth participation in decision-making was alarming. Despite often being seen as passive, young people were ready to participate, and they called for increased transparency, responsibility and action, clear accountability and less bureaucracy. Such changes went hand in hand with a rise in youth participation. Goal 10 of the Sustainable Development Goals, to reduce inequality among countries worldwide, was an important, but often overlooked goal. With increased global youth participation, global equality would be taken more seriously.

44. **Ms. Bisselink** (Netherlands), speaking as a youth delegate, said that she had experienced a feeling of exclusion in her country as a child of non-Western ethnicity. Many young people from marginalized and vulnerable groups had experienced the same feeling. Meanwhile, some native Dutch people were of the view that the Government cared more for refugees, and they too felt excluded, with no access to politics or policymaking. Almost all young Dutch people agreed that social polarization was among the root causes of violent extremism. Western States should take responsibility for the 2030 Agenda, as the Sustainable Development Goals, with themes such as inequality, youth, peace and security and education, were not applicable only to developing countries. Western States should take inequalities seriously in order not only to reach Goal 10, but also to effectively and sustainably prevent violent extremism. They should adopt ambitious plans and national policies connecting measures to combat inequalities with the youth and peace and security agenda, with a focus on creating equal opportunities for participation for all young people.

45. **Ms. Elgibreen** (Saudi Arabia) said that her country supported the approach proposed by the Secretary-General in his report on the plan of action to integrate volunteering into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/73/254) and, in that connection, had developed policies to encourage volunteerism and programmes to promote social solidarity. Saudi Arabia welcomed the conclusions and recommendations set out in the report of the Secretary-General on inclusive development for persons with disabilities (A/73/211/Rev.1) and supported measures to raise awareness of disability issues in relation to development and to improve coordination among United Nations agencies, with a view to empowering persons with disabilities. Saudi Arabia had strived to improve the quality of services provided to persons with disabilities in order to ensure prosperity for all groups in society. Accordingly, it had placed special emphasis on the needs of persons with disabilities when drafting its development plan for the period 2015–2019.

46. Saudi Arabia also attached great importance to improving educational outcomes. The Ministry of Education had launched an initiative to enhance cooperation among schools, families and the broader society, with a view to developing children's skills and inculcating moral values. The Family Affairs Council was working to strengthen the position of the family in society as part of its effort to integrate family policies into the national framework for sustainable development.

47. Older persons enjoyed special status in Saudi Arabia. The King Salman Social Centre employed state-of-the-art methods to care for older persons that preserved the connection between older persons and the broader society. In accordance with a royal decree,

Saudi Arabia provided educational and literacy services to its illiterate citizens, including older persons. The decree also stipulated that older persons of both genders must be given the opportunity to benefit from various social programmes and services.

48. **Ms. Rodríguez Abascal** (Cuba) said that social justice, solidarity, equality and respect for human rights were essential to ensure the survival of the human species. The developed countries should comply with their official development assistance commitments; promote a just international economic order; end protectionist and discriminatory policies in trade matters against countries in the South; consciously assume their historical responsibility with regard to the environmental crisis; and allocate to development the significant resources that were currently devoted to war.

49. In support of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, Cuba had implemented a strategy aimed at promoting the comprehensive development, self-realization and full social integration of persons with disabilities. The country's youth policy also had a strong social component, focusing on providing training and employment opportunities for young people and ensuring their participation and representation in decision-making processes. With regard to the elderly, Cuba welcomed the report presented on the third review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. In a country in which it was estimated that there would be 3.3 million people aged 60 or over by 2030, attention to the elderly was a priority.

50. With the active participation of civil society, multisectoral public policies were having a direct impact on families. In that regard, consultations on a new constitution had been launched with the participation of all Cubans, whether residing in the country or abroad. The text strengthened or developed a wide range of rights for families, youth, elderly persons and persons with disabilities and complied with the relevant international instruments to which Cuba was a party.

51. Cuba had already met several targets of the Sustainable Development Goals despite the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed for almost 60 years, which had a direct impact on the country's social development. By deploying over 55,000 Cuban health professionals to 67 countries, Cuba was putting into practice its commitment to work towards creating a just, equitable and inclusive world in which people should be at the centre of sustainable development.

52. **Ms. Miyazaki** (Japan) said that her country was working to build a society in which every person could actively participate regardless of their age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression or disability status by raising awareness to eliminate discrimination, addressing economic disparity and poverty and improving working conditions.

53. International efforts were imperative to achieve a society in which no one would be left behind. In that regard, Japan would build on the momentum of the Paralympic Games to be held in Tokyo in 2020 to promote the active participation of persons with disabilities in various sectors, including sports. In February 2017, it had adopted the Universal Design 2020 Action Plan, which it had continued to implement by promoting universal design and a society free from mental barriers.

54. As part of its efforts to support stable and self-sustaining growth in Africa, Japan had been working towards achieving quality growth by promoting robust health systems, supporting education and vocational training for young people, promoting the rule of law through capacity-building in juvenile justice systems and accelerating women's social advancement. Japan had also been implementing its commitment, made at the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), to invest $30 billion from both governmental and private sector sources. Preparations were under way to host the TICAD ministerial meeting in October 2018; the seventh TICAD summit in August 2019; and the World Assembly for Women in March 2019.

55. **Mr. Habich** (Peru) said that implementation of the social component of the 2030 Agenda should focus on the empowerment of people, particularly the most vulnerable social groups, and the development of social inclusion programmes. In that regard, social development and well-being were among the core themes of the country's General Government Policy. One of the goals of the policy was to drastically reduce the prevalence of anaemia in pregnant women and children under the age of 3 years, for which a multisectoral plan had been launched at the local, regional and national levels.

56. Committed to achieving the targets set out in the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, Peru had hosted the third session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in August 2018 and would be holding the presidency of the Regional Conference for the period 2018–2020.

57. Peru had made significant progress in recent years as a result of sustained economic growth combined with sound macroeconomic policies. However, economic

growth was not enough to ensure social development: public policies aimed at combatting poverty and promoting social inclusion were also required. The Government had consequently established the goal of reducing poverty by 15 per cent and providing water, sanitation, electricity and telecommunications services to all households. One of the mandates of the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion of Peru was to coordinate social policies and programmes for different sectors and levels of government to ensure access to quality public services and to opportunities that led to economic growth.

58. **Mr. Al-Khaqani** (Iraq) said that his Government had put in place social protection programmes that were aimed at creating an integrated social protection system that empowered the marginalized, especially older persons and those with special needs. Civil society organizations and social media were used to monitor the situations of those who lacked family caregivers, so that they could be provided with shelter and other forms of protection, when necessary. The Government was discussing a draft law on social security that complied with constitutional requirements, national legislation and international instruments.

59. A fund had been established at the Ministry of Youth and Sport to help youth set up small businesses. A Government programme to train youth in business administration and entrepreneurship had reduced their reliance on Government jobs and boosted self-employment. An Iraqi youth parliament had been established to prepare youths for political life and leadership roles, particularly with respect to national reconciliation efforts following the liberation by security forces of Iraqi territory previously held by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

60. The eradication of illiteracy globally was an important objective that should be integrated into adequately funded educational strategies and plans. The concept of lifelong learning should be promoted through investments in national educational systems. Iraq welcomed the assistance given by UNESCO to Member States to help them eradicate illiteracy.

61. **Mr. Chatha** (Pakistan) said that poverty and inequality were multifaceted challenges that needed multipronged solutions. Consequently, his country's policies were aimed at promoting financial inclusion, agricultural growth, rural development, the provision of educational opportunities and poverty eradication. The Government considered the provision of quality education for the less privileged members of society to be its foremost priority, and its innovative initiatives had led to the enrolment of 2.5 million students in the previous three years.

62. As part of its efforts to create new opportunities for all, Pakistan had established its Vision 2025 for long-term sustainable development. Initiatives included the Benazir Income Support Programme, a national social safety net programme providing financial support to vulnerable groups, which had been widely acknowledged for its positive contribution. Other strategies were aimed at enabling women, youth and persons with disabilities to become real partners in development.

63. The Government had also put in place a results-based monitoring system to evaluate the progress of strategies to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project was an ambitious example of South-South cooperation for the achievement of shared economic and development objectives, offering economic opportunities for the people of Pakistan, the entire region and beyond.

64. **Mr. Chernenko** (Russian Federation) said that the implementation of the decisions of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly was integral to the progressive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. His country could not, however, support the view put forward by a number of States in recent years that social development issues should be considered solely in the context of sustainable development and human rights. The Commission for Social Development should continue to take the lead within the United Nations system in formulating coordinated intergovernmental measures relating to young people, elderly persons, persons with disabilities and the family.

65. Despite the impact of unilateral sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation, his country complied fully with its social obligations to its citizens and was increasing financing for social programmes. In addition to strategies to support vulnerable groups, new national programmes were being developed to support population growth, increase life expectancy, maintain wage growth above the rate of inflation, halve the poverty rate, improve housing conditions and introduce digital technology in the economy and the social sphere. As a result of sound policies, the unemployment rate was at 5.2 per cent for the second year. The minimum wage was 72 per cent of the cost of living and would reach 100 per cent on 1 January 2019.

66. The State youth policy sought to expand opportunities for young people with a view to supporting their development and increasing capacity

for sustainable socioeconomic development. With regard to elderly persons, the current reform of the pension system was intended to increase their material well-being. Pensions would increase significantly, and persons of pre-retirement age would be guaranteed employment.

67. In February 2018, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had considered the initial report of the Russian Federation on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and commended the measures taken by the Russian leadership for the socioeconomic protection of persons with disabilities.

68. **Ms. Pham** Anh Thi Kim (Viet Nam) said that inequality threatened to undermine the progress that had already been made in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Moreover, the adverse effects of climate change exacerbated inequality and threatened the socioeconomic development of vulnerable countries. The increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather and natural disasters were of particular concern, as observed during the recent Typhoon Mangkhut in the Philippines and the tsunami and earthquakes in Indonesia. Recovery and reconstruction efforts following a natural disaster could take many years, in particular in economically disadvantaged areas. Viet Nam called for the international community to further strengthen its commitments and efforts to respond to climate change and to ensure a more sustainable life for future generations.

69. The interrelation between the digital divide and inequality was another area of concern. Viet Nam had recently hosted the World Economic Forum on ASEAN on the theme "ASEAN 4.0: Entrepreneurship and the Fourth Industrial Revolution" as a forum for leaders and the business community to share knowledge and gain insight into the impact of industry 4.0 on ASEAN member States and the entire region. The digital revolution had profound impacts on all aspects of people's lives: technologies should reach and benefit all individuals.

70. **Mr. Phansourivong** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that social development was one of the three pillars of the national development plan of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the other two being economic development and protection of the environment. His Government had established a five-year national socioeconomic development plan focused on human resource development, the eradication of poverty, and access to education and health care.

71. In line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, his country had adopted an action plan to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, gather data and develop and formulate policies on disability, raise awareness and encourage the public to help and respect persons with disabilities. His Government had also submitted for consideration by the National Assembly a new law on persons with disabilities, which would become the main mechanism to guarantee the rights of persons with disabilities.

72. An education development plan had been adopted to improve access to quality education, and steady progress was being made towards universal primary enrolment and gender parity in education. Respect and care for the elderly had always been an important part of Lao cultural values, and older persons in a family were seen as a source of inspiration, love and warmth for other members of the family and community. His Government provided social security and public services for older persons and was committed to continuing its work to improve development so that everyone in the country would enjoy a better life.

73. **Mr. Giorgio** (Eritrea) said that Eritrea had been making modest strides in social development and was determined to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the status of an economically prosperous middle-income country by 2030. It also hoped to become a socially harmonious nation that fulfilled the material and psychological needs of its citizens, regardless of their gender, creed, nationality, geographic location, age, physical condition or social status, and to make its contribution towards regional peace and progress.

74. Since independence, the Government had made considerable investments to expand social services. As a result, Eritrea had achieved all of the health-related Millennium Development Goals and was on track to attain full enrolment in primary school by 2020. A policy based on achieving social justice not only contributed to social cohesion and political stability but was the only path to sustainable development. However, more investment was required to consolidate the gains made and to accelerate socioeconomic development.

75. The seventy-third session of the General Assembly was being held at a time when the countries of the Horn of Africa had decided to close a dark chapter in their relations in which their resources had been squandered and their socioeconomic progress arrested. They had embarked on a new era of peace and economic integration that was anchored in a common history and shared future, which would surely accelerate social progress.

76. **Mr. Locsin** (Philippines) said that his country was committed to promoting and protecting the most

vulnerable sectors of society. Consistent with the 2030 Agenda, the country's long-term development vision "Our Ambition 2040" was focused on creating a prosperous and predominantly middle-class society in which all people could enjoy a stable and comfortable lifestyle and plan for their own and their children's future. In that context, the Government had implemented a cash transfer scheme that focused on the human capital development of around 5 million households.

77. The Philippines provided free universal access to quality tertiary education and was looking forward to a demographic dividend, with young people coming into the workforce in greater numbers in a country that was prepared to put their innate energy and educated talent to good use. Older persons, as the most vulnerable members of society, were protected through social programmes, and it was illegal to discriminate against them in employment.

78. Mindful of its commitment to leave no one behind, the Philippines joined other advocates in advancing the rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities and in protecting their dignity, recognizing that they were agents and beneficiaries of all aspects of development.

79. **Ms. Pobee** (Ghana) said that the key strategies identified by her Government to drive growth and development included revitalizing the economy, transforming agriculture and industry, strengthening social protection and inclusion, revamping economic and social infrastructure and reforming institutions delivering public services.

80. The Government had introduced a policy of free senior high school in 2017, which had catered for an estimated 90,000 young people who otherwise would have dropped out of high school owing to poverty. Steady progress had been made in the area of health and health services as a result of enhanced access to good-quality health care and nutrition. Community-based centres for health planning services across the country had helped to address the imbalance in geographical access to health care, and health coverage had significantly improved through the national health insurance scheme. The national social protection policy provided a comprehensive framework for the effective delivery of its social protection interventions. A law was being drafted to ensure the policy's sustainability in terms of funding and implementation. In line with the commitments set out in the 2030 Agenda concerning persons with disabilities and vulnerable populations, Ghana had taken measures to mainstream disability inclusion in its policies and had developed a manual on the framework and strategies for such mainstreaming.

81. International cooperation, support and partnerships were required to reduce national and global inequalities. The achievement of the targets of the 2030 Agenda depended in large part on the successful implementation of the objectives of the World Summit for Social Development; there was therefore a need to recommit to those objectives.

82. **Mr. Jaafar** (Brunei Darussalam) said that the population over the age of 65 years accounted for about 6 per cent of the total population of his country and was expected to double by 2035. Brunei Darussalam had therefore adopted measures to safeguard the welfare and promote and protect the rights of elderly persons, including the enactment of legislation on social protection. The National Council on Social Issues had established a special committee on persons with disabilities and the elderly, and it had approved an action plan that focused on a healthy and active life for senior citizens. Brunei Darussalam continued to ensure that elderly persons had access to comprehensive health-care services. The Ministry of Health and local communities had established an award programme to encourage senior citizens to lead healthy and active lives.

83. A "whole-of-nation" approach was taken to caring for the elderly, involving the private sector, non-governmental organizations and members of the local community. Platforms had been established to enable senior citizens to share their knowledge and experience with the younger generation. The family institution served as the main supporter of and provider for the elderly. Campaigns were conducted to raise awareness of the unacceptability of the abuse or neglect of senior citizens.

84. The International Day of Older Persons was celebrated annually in Brunei Darussalam. At the regional level, his country worked closely with the States members of ASEAN in promoting the quality of life and well-being of the elderly, as reflected in several regional declarations. Brunei Darussalam remained committed to United Nations initiatives for the promotion and protection of the elderly.

85. **Ms. Haokip** (India), speaking as a youth delegate, said that sustained economic development in India had lifted millions of people out of poverty. Financial inclusion and decent employment opportunities for all were at the heart of the country's development strategy. Digital empowerment played a key role in that regard, and a biometric system now covered more than 90 per cent of the population, enhancing access to vital services. As a result of the Government's financial inclusion programme, 320 million people now had bank accounts. The Government had disbursed more than

$25 billion through direct benefit transfers to more than 300 million beneficiaries and enhanced the efficiency of social security schemes. Under a loans programme for micro- and small businesses, more than 140 million loans had been granted.

86. As a step towards universal health coverage, the Prime Minister had launched a programme offering social security to 100 million vulnerable families. Given the importance of the welfare of families for sustainable development, women in India were entitled to 26 weeks of paid maternity leave, and it was mandatory for organizations with 50 or more employees to provide crèche facilities. Pension schemes, free legal aid services, targeted insurance coverage, higher interest rates on savings, tax rebates, travel discounts and preferential banking services contributed to ensuring a dignified life for older persons. The Accessible India Campaign promoted barrier-free access for persons with disabilities in public spaces and in virtual environments.

87. With half the population under the age of 25 years and two thirds under the age of 35, India was harnessing the demographic dividend by creating opportunities for the development of skills and entrepreneurship and by using digital technologies to improve access to information and knowledge. Programmes under the national youth policy focused on the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, social values and engagement in community affairs, politics, governance and voluntary social work.

88. **Ms. Abdelkawy** (Egypt) said that her Government had developed policies to address the multidimensional problems of poverty and inequality. Those policies were directed, in particular, at rural areas, women, persons with disabilities, older persons and school children, and included measures to increase low-income housing allocated for youth and address the problem of informal settlements. The Government had also developed a new, comprehensive health insurance law.

89. To address the problem of population growth, the Government had launched the "Two is Enough" programme, which was aimed at encouraging beneficiaries of social welfare programmes to have smaller families. The Government had also launched a programme to provide basic services to poor families that lacked access to clean water and sanitation. In addition, it had begun to implement its "Opportunities" programme, which would expand the social safety net and provide jobs for the neediest members of society. That programme was complemented by the conditional cash transfer programme and other social insurance schemes.

90. In implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Egyptian parliament had passed a law under which more than one million persons with disabilities received a monthly cash allowance. The law also contained provisions that guaranteed priority in education, training and employment to persons with disabilities, and reserved a set percentage of housing units for them. The social, economic and cultural rights of older persons were guaranteed under the Egyptian Constitution, which also stipulated that they must be given an adequate living allowance. The Government had recently announced a draft document on the rights of older persons. The Government had also sought to ensure financial inclusion for the country's youth by allocating $10 billion in funding for small projects and microprojects.

91. **Ms. Inanc-Ornekol** (Turkey) said that, since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, her country had taken steps to build a more resilient and sustainable society. Its national development model was people-centred and focused on economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection, and its development plan for the period 2019–2023 was consistent with the 2030 Agenda. Significant progress had been made in the areas of poverty eradication, job creation, better income distribution, social protection and access to basic services and rights.

92. Children, young people, elderly persons and persons with disabilities received special attention in the development process. Efforts to empower women and girls focused on removing economic and social barriers. Significant steps taken in the past decade to ensure the equal participation of persons with disabilities in social life included the adoption of legal arrangements designed to increase their access to education and the labour market, improve care services and diversify social protection measures. The national plan of action on ageing covered a wide spectrum of rights for older persons, and a commission on ageing had been established to raise awareness of their difficulties. Half the population of Turkey was under the age of 31 years, and the Government had developed structures and policies tailored to their needs. The age limit for election to Parliament had been lowered, and young people were encouraged to participate in decision-making processes.

93. As the host country of the largest refugee population in the world, Turkey was home to more than 3.5 million Syrians, 1 million of whom were children. The utmost importance was attached to their education, and Syrian children were enrolled in Turkish public schools as well as temporary centres. The Government not only addressed their material needs but also

provided cash assistance for every Syrian child attending school.

94. **Ms. Szuda** (Hungary), speaking as a youth delegate, said that over the past few months she had toured her country to promote the values and work of the United Nations and consulted with young people about topics of importance to them. The meetings had proved that young people had tremendous potential to serve as catalysts for positive change. In order to fulfil such potential, however, they needed to be empowered. High-quality education, inclusion in the labour market and participatory decision-making were key in that regard.

95. Young persons with disabilities faced barriers in access to secondary and higher education and employment. Many young girls and women still faced significant obstacles to reaching leadership positions. Discrimination on the basis of gender or ethnic, religious or socioeconomic background persisted, and no country had achieved full gender equality or ended discrimination in all its forms. All human beings must be provided with the means necessary for their full participation in society from the earliest age possible. Member States should help young people to fulfil their potential by adopting inclusive policies and following inclusive practices.

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.

United Nations A/C.3/73/SR.3

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Seventy-third session

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Summary record of the 3rd meeting
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Chair: Mr. Saikal ..... (Afghanistan)

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(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 28: Social development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/73/214)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/73/254, A/73/220, A/72/211, A/73/61-E/2018/4 and A/73/213)

(c) Literacy for life: shaping future agendas (*continued*) (A/73/292)

1. **Ms. Kempinsky** (Israel), speaking as a youth delegate, said that whereas her parents had been denied many opportunities in their country of origin, the Soviet Union, because they were Jewish, she, herself, had grown up in Israel, a democratic country, where she could express her opinions freely and attend the university of her dreams. As a participant in a project entitled Young Women Politicians, which was designed to strengthen the role of women in decision-making processes, she had met women politicians who were engaged at the national and local levels, as well as economists, researchers, diplomats and women founders of non-governmental organizations. That exposure convinced her that her parents' experiences as Jews were part of a bigger story relating to questions of gender, gender equality, the rights of young people and those of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender persons (LGBT). Inclusion should not be a privilege, but a given. Having grown up in the twenty-first century, her generation had the freedom to view gender, sexual orientation and race as irrelevant and was able to put aside the prejudice of past centuries and to treat people with respect, thereby ensuring for themselves and the generations to come the opportunities they deserved. Women's rights and LGBT rights should be already established as the natural way of the world.

2. **Mr. Dragos** (Romania), speaking as a youth delegate, said that education, civic engagement, and employment were the main concerns of Romanian young people, who sought specific training and opportunities in order to engage in problem-solving at the local and national levels. Educational curricula should be adapted to labour market requirements and leaders should put youth at the centre of public policy and foster an environment conducive to the development of that group. Youth advisory councils were being set up to promote political representation. Youth delegates also strove to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to establish a nation-wide framework for enhancing early childhood education, reducing the number of drop-outs from school and nurturing well-balanced human beings. Another facet of their mission was to eradicate stereotypes, stigmas, and myths based on ethnicity, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation and disability.

3. **Ms. Baba** (Romania), speaking as a youth delegate, said that faced with an ever-changing social and economic environment, new generations would need skills such as critical and creative thinking, adaptability, time management, decision-making and conflict resolution. The education system must be brought up-to-date and the goal should be to ensure equal opportunities for all.

4. **Ms. Garcia Lozano** (Mexico), speaking as a youth delegate, said that more than 37 million young people lived in Mexico. Along with the rest of the population, they recognized the 2030 Agenda as a watershed in the work of the Organization and national development planning. Young people, families, older persons and persons with disabilities were not only stakeholders with cross-cutting interests in Agenda 2030 but also the very groups targeted.

5. For purposes of coherence, issues must be discussed in the appropriate forums. Clearly, there was significant overlap among the topics addressed by the Third Committee and those dealt with by the Second Committee, the Economic and Social Council, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Commission for Social Development. She wondered what purpose could be served by repeating the same discourse in five different forums. Under Agenda 2030, development was recognized as the fundamental pillar and pivotal element of the Organization's operations, hence the need for coherence.

6. Mexico sought to provide equal opportunities in the areas of health, security, education, housing, basic services and labour. Building a more prosperous society depended on the extent to which groups such as migrants, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities were empowered to exercise their rights as human beings. Sometimes, the best way of leaving no one behind was to bring such people to the fore. The National Strategy for Inclusion had helped to alleviate poverty and to ensure fulfilment of the rights enshrined in the Constitution and in the international treaties to which Mexico was a party.

7. Other institutions, in close alignment with Agenda 2030, were designed to protect older persons and enable

them to enjoy an active, healthy and dignified old age; to assert the role of young people as rights-holders and stakeholders in development; and to promote participation in political and social forums. Based on the recognition of the multiple forms of family, the National Programme for Equality and Non-Discrimination had mounted campaigns to promote respect for sexual and gender diversity and to reject all forms of discrimination against different types of family. Genuinely sustainable development was predicated on mainstreaming the human rights perspective in the various issues before the Committee. Mexico would consistently support any stance that sought to promote the wellbeing of the most vulnerable groups.

8. **Mr. De Souza Monteiro** (Brazil) said that vulnerable groups were more seriously impacted by income inequality and the unequal availability of social services. Exclusion was manifest among older persons, women, migrants and persons of African descent. Combating socioeconomic inequality would promote human rights, and equal access to education and health care, pensions, safe drinking water, sanitation, transportation, housing and digital technology and services would provide incentives for inclusive growth.

9. The forthcoming sessions of the Commission on Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women would be unique opportunities for tackling the challenges posed by rising levels of inequality. The world was living through a delicate economic and political context and inequality might be contributing to social unease. The United Nations and its agencies, the World Bank and the regional economic commissions had a pool of the very best specialists and the most current data. The problem had been identified and a range of technical measures were available. The international community must therefore engage politically with the issue with the urgency and detail it deserved. It must come together to guarantee that it was working towards a more inclusive national, international socioeconomic environment.

10. **Ms. Quiza** (Colombia) said that her country understood that the international development frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were interrelated, mutually reinforcing instruments for guaranteeing the human rights of vulnerable groups and for achieving a form of sustainable development that would leave no one behind. However, other international agendas, in particular the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, contained equally ambitious and transformative commitments that were irreplaceable in efforts to achieve sustainable development worldwide. Thus, the United Nations system should continue to identify synergies and step up efforts to ensure convergence of the multiple development agendas and to deliver concrete results. It was vital that discussions on poverty in the context of social development should go beyond a monetarist vision and encompass a host of other elements such as inequality, lack of education and lack of access to dignified housing.

11. **Ms. Gran** (Norway), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the number of conflicts driven by climate-related shocks was on the rise, causing pressure on food security. Multiple forms of malnutrition coexisted, affecting children and young people the most. Addressing food insecurity called for a holistic and conflict-sensitive approach to efforts to sustain peace. Girls living in conflict areas and in some refugee communities faced the danger of early or forced marriages. Through healthcare, education and equal opportunity, all States could empower young girls to become champions of change in their own communities. In conflict areas, young people were unable to attend school and were more vulnerable to violence and recruitment by armed groups. Member States must protect schools from being used as a strategic target in conflict. The extent and depth of trauma suffered by young people at the hands of armed groups threatened to create a lost generation in some parts of the world. Yet young people had never been more dynamic and engaged, showcasing their potential as much more than victims of conflict.

12. **Mr. Svendsrud** (Norway), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, notwithstanding Security Council resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), which recognized children and youth as positive and important change-makers in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes, that narrative was not acknowledged in all processes and many young people's lives were disrupted by conflict.

13. Of all the children born each year, 1.7 per cent were born with sex traits that did not fit typical definitions of male and female. Intersex people were often subject to irreversible surgery without the opportunity to make an informed decision. He called on Member States to put an end to that practice, to realize their rights to physical integrity, health, privacy and autonomy. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer persons must be entitled to enjoy the protections provided by law, including the right to life, security of person and privacy, and freedom from discrimination. Member States should invest in youth, enabling them to participate and make their voice heard in politics and decision-making. It was time to make

young people part of the solution, allowing them to shape a better future for all.

14. **Ms. Kuhn** (Germany), speaking as a youth delegate, asked whether the delegations attending the current meeting could affirm that decision makers in their country consulted with youth regularly and whether participation was open to the latter, irrespective of their ethnic, educational and financial background and of whether they lived in cities or rural areas; good solutions often required only creativity and passion for change, attributes that did not depend on age. While youth were disproportionately affected by problems relating to education and unemployment, their priorities ranged far beyond those issues to include reducing the gender pay gap, ensuring access to water for all and creating more inclusive societies. Their perspective was unique and must be taken into account in the search for solutions.

15. **Mr. Schlapp** (Germany), speaking as a youth delegate, said that wide geographical representation of the world's youth within the framework of the United Nations Youth Delegate Programme was essential. Young people were not a homogenous group, and meaningful youth participation must reflect their diversity.

16. **Ms. Korac** (United States of America) said that her Government championed social development and the empowerment of social groups through policies and programmes at the domestic and international levels. Since the establishment of the Commission for Social Development in 1946, however, other high-profile bodies and processes, in particular the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, had been instituted and, in the interests of eliminating duplication, she wondered whether the Commission was still able to provide added value to the debate on those subjects. As long as it continued in its current role and as Member States continued their efforts to strengthen it, her delegation recommended that annual sessions of the Commission be cut back to two to four days, bearing in mind that Member States started negotiating draft resolutions before a session began; that multiple or recurring resolutions be eliminated and that a single, action-oriented, negotiated document be adopted to effect meaningful improvements in peoples' lives. That approach had been successfully used by other commissions to consider a topic comprehensively and examine emerging issues; the Commission should produce fewer resource-intensive reports that duplicated work done elsewhere.

17. The proposed reforms were consistent with the recommendations her Government had put forward for making the work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council more efficient and effective, including seeking to reduce the number of reports, conferences and negotiations by 50 per cent. She urged Member States to reflect on whether there was still a need for a stand-alone commission for social development, for which the overall cost would be $515,000, or whether other United Nations bodies and processes could handle the issues covered by the Commission more effectively and with better results.

18. **Mr. Ibrahim** (Sweden), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the maintenance of international peace and security must encompass a variety of stakeholders. Young people under the age of 30 accounted for as much as one third of the world's population but were often not able to contribute to the discourse on that subject. Given their tremendous potential as positive agents of change and in building sustainable peace in their societies, they must be allowed to engage and take part in decision-making at all levels. Peace was crucial for development and mechanisms must be put in place to protect youth from violent conflict.

19. In addition to the traditional drivers of forced displacement, such as persecution and armed conflict, people were obliged to leave their homes for a variety of complex reasons including poverty, lack of access to health services, education, water, food and housing, environmental degradation and climate change. Migrants in an irregular situation should not be treated as criminals. In the absence of safe pathways for migration, many migrants were compelled to enter and stay in countries of destination irregularly, and were exposed to abuse, exploitation, and even torture and death by a range of perpetrators, including corrupt state officials and traffickers. The detention of children because of their parents' migration status was a clear violation of the rights of the child and tantamount to torture. With the rise in anti-immigration sentiment and racism in many countries, advocacy on behalf of the voiceless was increasingly important. The forthcoming Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, would be an opportunity for world leaders and the young people he represented to ensure that the voices of migrant children and youth would be heard by world leaders and decision makers.

20. **Mr. Cortorreal** (Dominican Republic) said that his Government was implementing programmes and policies to eradicate poverty and inequality through investment in education, health and youth employment. National instruments were being brought in line with the different international conventions that his country had

ratified with a view to inclusion of the most vulnerable population groups and the well-being of its people as a whole. Open discussions were held on issues affecting the young population, including bullying, drug consumption, gender and sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, gender violence and teenage pregnancies. His Government advocated greater participation by young people in decision-making processes on issues that concerned them. It was also committed to upgrading teacher training and well-being as a means of improving the education system and to increase the use of information and communications technologies in production, education and government services. Comprehensive care for young children, primary and secondary education for all and institution-building were other areas conducive to the training of democratic citizens capable of transforming the material, social and cultural reality in their country.

21. Public policies had been launched to enhance the activity, productivity, participation and protection of older persons and to provide care for those living in extreme poverty, with special provision for intervening during emergencies. Further progress should be made towards the adoption of a legally binding international instrument for the promotion and protection of the human rights of older persons.

22. Some advances had been made in improving accessibility for persons with disabilities. Public-private partnerships were being forged in the education, tourism and financial sectors to improve public policies designed for that population. In that regard, the National Council on Disabilities was cooperating with the statistical body to include the questions designed by the Washington Group in national household surveys.

23. **Ms. Sorto Rosales** (El Salvador) said that the Government of El Salvador was firmly committed to achieving social inclusion as one of the basic and interrelated dimensions of social development. In 2017, it had adopted a national strategy for eradicating extreme poverty, which sought to improve the quality of life of the poorest families by strengthening the social fabric and generating livelihoods from a rights perspective. Specific population groups were prioritized, namely, young children, adolescents and young people, older persons, indigenous people and persons with disabilities. Vulnerable or marginalized situations could occur at different periods in a person's life cycle. Thus, combating poverty, inequality and exclusion under the 2030 Agenda should be approached holistically, bearing in mind specific needs as they arose. Public policy initiatives targeting youth were designed to endow them with skills for life through training, the provision of seed capital, scholarships or grants, and by making it easier for dropouts to re-enter the school system. Education was also provided on health matters, such as sexual and reproductive health and in reducing pregnancy among girls and adolescents.

24. The Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons, ratified by El Salvador in December 2017, served as a guide in public policies, which were designed to uphold the dignity and independence of older persons. A national policy for older persons had been launched in 2017, in consultation with persons of that age group. Member States must ensure that persons 60 years and over participated actively in efforts to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals and targets and should pursue their discussions on the possible adoption of an international legal instrument to promote, protect and safeguard for older persons the full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Her Government was also committed to promoting the full inclusion, integration and civil, social political, economic and cultural participation of persons with disabilities and recognized the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as the fundamental instrument in that regard.

25. **Mr. Issetov** (Kazakhstan) said that the ambitious but necessary goals of Agenda 2030 would require enormous resources, hence the importance of implementing the recommendations of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. In spite of the downward spiral in global economic trends, Kazakhstan had increased social support and protection by annually augmenting its financing for children, youth, women, older persons and persons with disabilities. Its national strategy and economic policy would guarantee higher quality education, health care, affordable social housing and enhanced social security. Under a special government programme and quota system, employers would receive funding to subsidize the creation of jobs for persons with disabilities.

26. Kazakhstan promoted the concept of active ageing, ensuring that older persons enjoyed full rights without distinction or discrimination and allowing them to live safely and with dignity. His Government had offered Almaty as the site for a United Nations regional hub for promoting sustainable development, humanitarian assistance and building resilience in Central Asia. It aspired to achieve the objectives of the United Nations by conscientiously translating them into national policies and programmes and leading other countries in the region in the same direction. In partnership with African countries and the United Nations Development Programme, Kazakhstan

had provided capacity-building to 45 ministries of foreign affairs in the region. With the help of the Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), it had developed biogas projects for small island developing States to assist them in their transition to a green economy.

27. As the largest landlocked country in the world, Kazakhstan had promoted the advancement of landlocked least developed countries, especially in Eurasia, to help them to overcome their geographical disadvantages. Energy being the driver for all the Sustainable Development Goals, his country had organized Astana EXPO 2017 to showcase renewable sources of energy for the twenty-first century.

28. **Mr. Arriola Ramírez** (Paraguay) said that his country had brought its 2030 National Development Plan in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the three branches of government had pledged their commitment to the 2030 Agenda, establishing an innovative, participatory institutional architecture. Convinced that all persons deserved to live with dignity, his Government promoted programmes for inclusive development, progressively increasing social investment in order to integrate persons living in poverty, especially women, children, indigenous people, older persons and the rural population. The newly-elected Government would continue to implement the emblematic social protection programmes including conditional cash transfers; school food programme; food allowances for older persons living in poverty; and the poverty reduction programme.

29. In order to step up national efforts to improve social conditions, the Department for Social Action had been upgraded to the ministerial level and assigned the mission of leading and coordinating State social protection and promotion initiatives targeting the population living in poverty and extreme poverty. The Ministry for Social Development would place emphasis on coordinating the activities of public service entities operating at the different levels of government while ensuring the active participation of civil society. Its aim would be to promote the effective and efficient implementation of the new social protection system.

30. Reaffirming its commitment to the 2030 Agenda, particularly the goal of poverty eradication, Paraguay would continue its efforts to ensure that all persons would enjoy a life of dignity and the fulfilment of their economic, social and cultural rights.

31. **Mr. Isnomo** (Indonesia) said that development was meant to benefit all peoples of all backgrounds regardless of gender, ethnicity, age or ability. It was not merely the sum of building roads, bridges and skyscrapers. Indeed, the essence of social development was about illuminating the hearts and minds of people, enabling shared growth so that all could prosper together and live as healthy, productive members of society. Indonesia reaffirmed its commitment to the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. Partnership and international coordination were part of the solution for solving those social challenges that could not be overcome by domestic efforts alone. Indonesia was committed to eradicating poverty, realizing the potential of all citizens and empowering the people. Its poverty alleviation strategy focused on three areas: comprehensive social protection; the provision of improved access to basic services; and sustainable livelihood. As a result, the proportion of the population living below the national poverty line had declined from 11.75 per cent in 2006 to 10.12 per cent in 2017. The aim was to further reduce that proportion to 7 per cent by 2019. The number of beneficiaries of health services provided under the national social security system had risen to 195.2 million in 2018.

32. Social protection had also been extended to the education, welfare and employment sectors. Poverty reduction had been achieved through job creation and infrastructure development. In addition, under the Smart Indonesia Programme, poor students between the ages of 6 and 21 received cash to enable them to complete their schooling. The Government had also revitalized vocational training, and industry contributed to curriculum development for vocational and technical schools. Training and internship opportunities would be provided to students as well as teachers by private companies. That reform was designed to develop skill sets that would reflect market demand, thus further strengthening the workforce in Indonesia.

33. Indonesia was a party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities since 2011. The law relating to persons with disability adopted in 2016 marked a significant shift from the social approach to a human-rights approach. His country was also in the process of ratifying the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled.

34. **Ms. Ruminowicz** (Poland) said that her country attached great importance to the protection and promotion of the family and family policies. In line with the Follow-up to the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond, the Government of Poland had introduced a number of

family-oriented policies. The programme Family 500+, launched in 2016, sought to provide financial support for families bringing up children. All families, irrespective of their income, received a monthly benefit for their second and each subsequent child. Families with a child with a disability were entitled to a higher benefit. The programme had led to a decline in poverty and a rise in the number of births. Another initiative, the Good-Start Programme, provided a one-time benefit for each child attending school to assist the family with expenses at the start of the school year. Introduced for the first time in 2018, it covered 4.6 million children and catered also for the special needs of children with disabilities.

35. The fight against poverty and social exclusion and the promotion of social integration were among the main goals of social policy in Poland. Social assistance played an important role in that context, providing support to persons and families in difficulty, mainly at the local level, through cash benefits and benefits in kind. Other programmes were being implemented to address homelessness and strengthen participation in the economy of people at risk of exclusion. Her country remained fully committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and would continue to place the contribution of the family to social development high on its agenda.

36. **Ms. Klonowska** (Poland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that she and her colleague had registered the needs of their peers and wished to communicate them. In most cases, they had detected frustration relating to unemployment but that was just one of the issues of concern to young Polish adults. The difficulties encountered by young people as they made the critical transition from school to labour market could not be overestimated. They included restrictive labour laws, discrimination and unpaid internships that offered few if any guarantees of employment. Moreover, the market was changing faster than ever before, generating a demand for digital competence, soft skills and highly specialized knowledge. Youth unemployment was a major adverse factor for all parties, hindering personal development, heightening economic risks and weakening political stability.

37. **Ms. Krzastek** (Poland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that, as stated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the United Nations Youth Strategy, it was vital to achieve inclusive economic growth and provide decent jobs for all. Structural reforms should remove entry barriers, create effective connections between education and jobs and ensure that education was relevant to the job market. Indeed, education should be updated to enable students to adapt quickly to changing labour market conditions.

38. The youth unemployment rate in Poland had fallen significantly faster than the average world rate. However, more must be done to tap into young people's potential as agents of change and as a source of ideas and solutions. She urged Member States to work closely together to respond to the challenges faced by youth as they sought to enter the job market. The new United Nations Youth Strategy, which was designed to engage and empower people, could serve as an effective instrument for sustainable change.

39. **Mr. Zambrano Ortiz** (Ecuador) said that his delegation believed that poverty eradication strategies should be defined covering all its dimensions in order to secure sustainable development for all and ensure that no one was left behind. Ecuador espoused an alternative multidimensional conception of development. "Sumak Kawsay", or "good living", meant living with dignity, in harmony with nature, with oneself and with other human beings, while satisfying one's basic needs. It signified living life to the full without the excesses of the consumer society.

40. Under the 2017–2021 National Development Plan, a road map had been drawn up to coordinate the activities to be conducted by the State for the benefit of all citizens throughout their lives. Using an integrated, intersectoral approach, the road map was designed to protect the rights of priority groups, with reference to the wide range of needs that would arise over the course of their lives.

41. Ecuador reaffirmed the need to build more equitable societies with emphasis on guaranteeing the well-being of all members. A programme had been launched to ensure that vulnerable older persons could enjoy a dignified and healthy life. Programmes, policies and appropriate legal frameworks should be established to empower older persons and enable them to participate fully in social, economic, cultural and political life, to treat them with dignity, and guarantee for them the full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

42. Ecuador was currently serving as Chair of the Bureau of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It had adopted a national agenda for the equality of persons with disabilities, based on the Sustainable Development Goals.

43. Ecuador viewed the protection of human rights as fundamentally a matter of shared responsibility that depended on all stakeholders in the society. Strengthening inclusiveness, solidarity and equality was

a national priority for his country and indispensable for building a universal culture of peace. Public policies with a strong social content would foster equal opportunities. His country would continue to strive to achieve a more inclusive society through its comprehensive, unifying rights-based vision, which would encourage social integration and access to services and benefits for all persons, especially those that had traditionally been excluded. That approach was vital in view of the commitment to leave no one behind on the path towards sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda.

44. **Ms. Turner** (Jamaica) said that bearing in mind that greater investment in human capital yielded exponential returns for national development, the Jamaica Social Investment Fund sought to foster economic growth geared to poverty alleviation; to develop a productive youth work force; to boost job creation; and to stimulate increased earnings at the micro, small and medium-sized enterprise levels. Approximately, 1.4 million Jamaicans had benefited from projects targeting rural and agricultural development; health; education; and family development. The 2014 National Social Protection Strategy was designed to promote inclusion in all aspects of national development by combating inequality, poverty and vulnerability. Inspired by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Vision 2030 Jamaica programme aimed to give each person the opportunity, capability and support needed to enjoy a sustainable and good quality of life. Jamaica had set a target date of 2022 for eradicating extreme poverty and one of 2030 for reducing the prevalence of poverty to under 10 per cent.

45. The Disabilities Act had been adopted in 2014 and a campaign, spearheaded by the Jamaica Council for Persons with Disabilities, had been launched in November 2017 to raise awareness of its provisions. The Act placed emphasis on affording equal opportunities to persons with disabilities and on enhancing their inclusion within families and the society in general. In line with global trends and the wider Caribbean, the number of older persons had been increasing steadily in Jamaica and the national policy for senior citizens, currently under revision, would seek to strengthen protection for older persons, while recognizing the valuable contribution they made to national development efforts. A national registry of senior citizens would be developed to facilitate the provision of social assistance and services and ensure that they remained a visible and valuable segment of the Jamaican society in the context of intergenerational solidarity.

46. Jamaica viewed the family as the main vehicle for building a cohesive society. Strategic investments were being made in health and education in an effort to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty for poor households. Under the Programme of Advancement Through Health and Education (PATH), direct benefits were provided to an estimated 70 per cent of families living below the national poverty line. However, her country was unable to provide optimal budgetary support for social protection owing to its constrained fiscal space and high debt burden. Special attention should be given to highly indebted middle-income countries which lacked the fiscal space to preserve their hard-won development gains. Jamaica remained hopeful, however, that collective will at the global level, coupled with determined national action, would result in the eradication of poverty and the attainment of sustainable development for all its citizens.

47. **Mr. García Moritán** (Argentina) said that development was inconceivable without the social dimension. No far-reaching, lasting changes could be achieved without recognizing inclusion as an essential component. Effective strategies for eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions called for innovation and policies that combined the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

48. In accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Argentina understood that social policies must address poverty in all its complexity from a human as well as a material perspective, bearing in mind the emergence of a whole host of new vulnerabilities. The overarching challenge of achieving zero poverty was a cross-cutting objective for the different government ministries in Argentina in all programme areas. The State must play a proactive role in the design, implementation and strengthening of a comprehensive, integrated social protection system to guarantee respect for the rights of persons throughout their lives.

49. Older persons, young people, children and adolescents should all be empowered to act as central players in development and to exercise their human rights fully. The specific needs of vulnerable groups required an ongoing commitment by States. The same applied to persons with disabilities who must be enabled to participate fully in society and enjoy their human rights on an equal basis with the rest of society.

50. Ensuring genuine gender equity was of vital importance. A multisectoral approach encompassing institution-building and cultural change was necessary, in particular to empower women in situations of violence.

51. Argentina had assumed the presidency of the Group of 20 in December 2017 under the theme "Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development between G20 and Africa". During his country's presidency, the G20 Development Working Group had focused on promoting inclusive economic growth with emphasis on strengthening peoples' skills. Three further areas of focus were investment in early childhood to generate opportunities and enhance the quality of life; inclusive business as a means of incorporating persons currently excluded from the system; and, lastly, sustainable habitat in order to improve living conditions and guarantee access to housing.

52. His delegation wished to emphasize the importance of continuing to move towards full respect for the human rights of older persons through the adoption of a binding international legal instrument which would serve as a guide for the international community in guaranteeing the full participation of older persons in the development of society, and in a life free from violence, discrimination, indifference, abuse and ill-treatment.

53. **Ms. Torikashvili** (Georgia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that Earth was the only planet that humans could call home and it was their responsibility to take care of it using the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Anyone who wished to make a positive impact on the world must start immediately, without hesitation. She, along with other Georgians, had established a youth organization, called Paint the World, that provided psychological support to people in crisis through art therapy projects in hospitals, orphanages, hospices, elderly shelters and centres for persons with disabilities. The movement had spread internationally and demonstrated that, by pooling resources and following their dreams, people could make a positive difference. As a global citizen who had travelled widely, she had witnessed poverty, crime, racism, child abuse and most of all, hopelessness. She realized that human beings were doing something wrong.

54. Love for one's country required a willingness to speak out for what was right and to shake up the status quo. Governments must be held responsible for their actions. Globally, education should be treated as the top priority and youth policies should be implemented with a view to reshaping educational systems. Education must be transformed to enable children to pursue their true passion and use their education to bring about change, innovation and progress. Leaders that lacked the right intentions abused their power outrageously. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals called for a generation of bold people who would be kind to one another, solve all international and regional conflicts and build a civilization that would live in harmony and lasting peace.

55. The Youth Movement for Reconciliation, established under the mandate of her country's youth delegate to the United Nations, supported Government efforts for reconciliation with their Abkhaz and Ossetian brothers and sisters. Human beings needed to unite to paint the world with the bright colours of unity and peace.

56. **Mr. Wu** Haitao (China) said that the international community needed to address imbalances in development and must, above all, preserve multilateralism. All countries must observe the rules-based system with the United Nations at its core and the multilateral system centred on the World Trade Organization in order to promote economic globalization that was open, inclusive and capable of delivering benefits for all. Each country's chosen path towards development should be respected along with its right to pursue a better life for its people and enhance its development opportunities.

57. In integrating the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into their national development strategies, countries must take into account their specific conditions and stage of development. International development partnerships must be enhanced in order to promote international development cooperation with the United Nations at its core, North-South cooperation as the main channel, and South-South cooperation as a supplementary feature.

58. Inclusive social development called for a people-centred approach. Greater fiscal investment was required to protect the legitimate rights and interests of vulnerable groups enabling all to share in the fruits of development.

59. The reform and opening up of China forty years earlier which had charted a path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, had led to historic achievements: 700 million people had been lifted out of extreme poverty and, by 2020, the income of poor people in rural areas was expected to be above the poverty line. Primary health care had been instituted along with a pension system that benefited 900 million people. Thus, Chinese people had gained a stronger sense of achievement, happiness and security.

60. China was the largest developing country in the world and had been actively assisting other developing countries. The Belt and Road Initiative was a public good that China offered to the world. To date, over 130 countries and international organizations had signed

cooperation agreements under that initiative. China was forging close partnership with African countries to promote common development and mutual prosperity. China stood ready to work with all countries to promote development cooperation and benefits for all and jointly build a community with a shared future for all humanity.

61. **Ms. O'Boyle** (Ireland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, together with the Nelson Mandela Peace Summit and the twentieth anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement in Ireland, gave the international community the chance to pause and reflect on how it could ensure that the human rights of all would be met in the future. Young people were the experts on their own needs and realities. Governments should, therefore, invest in initiatives to support them in exercising their agency, leadership and voice. Involving young people was not a photo opportunity. It required a commitment to engaging them at all levels of policy development, decision-making and implementation. All generations must join forces with the millions of young people across the globe who were striving to mitigate climate change. Patriarchal practices and norms continued to jeopardize the safety of girls and women and to hinder their access to quality health care and education, decent work and equal pay.

62. Her country's role as Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women was a source of pride. Gender equality was not a gift to be granted but a fundamental right. Achieving full gender equality by 2030 would require comprehensive legislative and societal changes that recognized the specific needs of girls and young women. If it was truly committed to leaving no one behind, the international community must engage with young people and work together as the generations for change that would achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

63. **Mr. Moore** (Ireland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the right to an adequate standard of living, health, housing and social security, enshrined in Article 25.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, had yet to be fully realized for many of the world's people. Unacceptable numbers of young people were not in education, employment or training. Governments must improve their efforts in planning, supporting and delivering targeted education and labour activation programmes. Education should not be dictated by the circumstances of one's birth but should reflect a young person's boundless potential and cater to his or her unique needs.

64. Some children and young people in developed countries had to endure poverty, inadequate accommodation or homelessness. The life chances of those young people were being lost. Governments must provide the necessary infrastructure and services to lift young people out of poverty and empower them to become agents of change in their own lives and in their families and communities. Rural communities were losing generations of young people who had no choice but to leave for education, employment and social services. Regional and rural development policies should seek to build more inclusive, resilient and sustainable communities for all.

65. Governments must use the fruits of their prosperity for the betterment of humanity and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In the current globalized world, human beings should live in each other's shelter, not in each other's shadow. He called on Member States and civil society to take radical steps to deliver on the objectives of the United Nations Youth Strategy, Youth 2030, enabling young people to enjoy their human rights, achieve their full potential and act as positive agents for change.

66. **Mr. Bakhtiar** (Afghanistan), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the agenda item under discussion was extremely relevant to his country not only as a social development priority for the Government but also for the young generation. Notwithstanding the devastation and losses caused by four decades of conflict and terrorism, his generation was committed to playing a constructive role in building a democratic society in a country that stood up for human dignity and the rights of its most marginalized groups. More than 1 million people in Afghanistan, including youth, had disabilities. Their need for education, employment and health-care services must be addressed without delay. For his part, born and raised in a remote rural village far from any centre of education, he wished to continue to live and work in his country. The Afghan people were fighting persistently to free the country from the shackles of war. They had shared pain, visions and ambitions. They dreamed of building a prosperous country and were working to be the creators of that bright future. Having served in the past in sectors ranging from the media and civil society to the private sector, young people had recently taken up leadership positions in the Government.

67. In 2002, women and girls were almost completely barred from entering educational institutions. But, currently, 9.2 million children, of whom 39 per cent were girls, were enrolled in schools. The investment in education had led to profound social development. An emboldened generation of activists, teachers, journalists, lawyers, political leaders and artists was seeking to improve the country. That development

process must be sustained. More than 70 per cent of Afghans were under the age of 30. Young people were in the majority and their voices needed to be amplified. If neglected, they might be driven towards extremism and radicalization. Youth participation in social and political processes was therefore a precondition for social development and sustainable peace. Thousands of candidates, including youth and women, were running for the forthcoming parliamentary elections. Among them was a 30-year-old Sikh, whose father, previously a candidate, had been killed by a suicide bomb in July 2018. Nevertheless, his candidacy was a clear manifestation of the emergence of a tolerant Afghanistan, committed to democracy, diversity and equality. The inclusion of youth in decision-making at all levels was not a choice but a must for securing a future of prosperity.

68. **Ms. Spizzuoco** (Italy), speaking as a youth delegate, said that greater inclusiveness of young people must start immediately. Young people should tackle not just youth-related issues but any obstacles to the construction of a more sustainable and equal world. While Italy had an ageing population, it was committed to the inclusion and empowerment of youth under the Youth Delegate Programme. Governments recognized the value of young people and were eager to promote their involvement in national and international institutions. The Programme should be promoted in all countries, given that it was a unique opportunity to participate directly in the United Nations decision-making process. Youth delegates epitomized inclusion, serving as a direct link between a nation's youth and other sectors of the population and as a bridge between young men and women from different cultural and social backgrounds. The first concern of her youth delegation was to determine ways of helping Italian and international youth to combat discrimination based on ethnicity, gender and religious belief, even among young people. In that connection, the first source of inspiration should be the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was a driver of social development and designed to leave no one behind.

69. **Mr. Fochi** (Italy), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the Sustainable Development Goals were indeed the core pillars of the Italian Development Cooperation Agency. A key part of his country's commitment to social development was the protection and promotion of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities, including mental and intellectual ones. Inclusion meant fighting all forms of discrimination and must start with education. In countries where schools and universities promoted cooperation, integration and teamwork, cultural and social differences were likely to be recognized as a source of enrichment and a factor in development. It was in that spirit that Italy had submitted its candidacy to the Human Rights Council for the term 2019–2021.

70. Italy had been supporting the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and had recently allocated $500,000 for the development of a new project for promoting sustainable peace through national youth policies in the framework of the 2030 Agenda. Encouraging youth entrepreneurship would greatly foster such a link, helping young people to guarantee a more stable and sustainable future for the benefit of the society as a whole.

71. **Ms. Lim** (Singapore) said that with the rapid ageing of the population in Singapore, concerted national efforts were required to meet the needs of older persons. At the global level, fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda would depend on international action to address similar trends. Her country's Action Plan for Successful Ageing, launched in 2016, sought to maximize the opportunities that arose from longevity and to channel the experience and skills of its older adults towards economic and social development. The Plan covered all aspects of the needs of older persons. Support, including respite services, was provided to family caregivers to boost their own emotional health and well-being and help them to provide better care for the older persons under their charge.

72. As the number of older persons living alone increased, Singapore was facilitating ageing within communities as a preferred option over institutionalized care. The Community Networks for Seniors coordinated the efforts of volunteers, care service organizations, government agencies and other stakeholders to make sure that the physical and socio-emotional needs of seniors were addressed holistically. Other options such as community nursing and active ageing hubs in residential neighbourhoods were used to empower older persons to remain active contributors within their communities. The Vulnerable Adults Act allowed the State to intervene as a last resort in cases where an adult was suffering or at risk of abuse or self-neglect. Older persons had dedicated some of their best years to building up their societies and countries and deserved assistance as they aged to enable them to remain engaged in society or to age with dignity in their communities.

73. **Mr. Sahraoui** (Algeria) said that the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals was still remote. His country therefore called for a true global partnership for development to achieve well-being, solidarity and genuine sharing of responsibility. National development

plans implemented since 2000 had enabled his country to reach a high level of human development. A two-pillar education strategy provided for full and free access to primary and higher education and for combating illiteracy. The net enrolment rate for children aged six was 98.5 per cent and the illiteracy rate currently stood at 10.16 per cent, down from 22.3 per cent in 2008.

74. In the area of employment, several mechanisms established to facilitate access to loans and strengthen investment in agriculture, industry and tourism had helped to stabilize the unemployment rate at around 10 per cent. Algeria was committed to providing health coverage for all its citizens, in particular vulnerable populations, and had set aside 18 per cent of its public spending for that budget item. Guaranteeing the rights of person with disabilities to education, work and access to health care was another concern, and his Government had submitted a report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities earlier in 2018. With respect to the protection and preservation of the dignity of older persons, his country had adopted a set of policies and actions to improve the status of older persons and integrate them economically and socially.

75. **Ms. Altemimi** (Qatar) said that the 2030 Qatar National Vision aimed to build an effective system for social protection that would promote the civil rights of all citizens, guarantee their effective participation in the development of society and provide dignity and health to all. Under the 2018–2022 national development strategy, social protection was again one of the main priorities. Systems and programmes had been put in place to guarantee a decent life for all citizens without discrimination. The role of the State went beyond cash assistance to the most vulnerable categories; the Qatar Foundation for Social Work provided social protection services in conjunction with seven civil society institutions.

76. In the preceding year and a half, Qatar had worked to overcome obstacles designed to prevent it from moving forward with its ambitious development plans. Nevertheless, its institutions had succeeded in providing services to its citizens and other residents adversely affected by the inhumane unilateral measures taken against it, providing family, social and rehabilitation services, reflecting its commitment to human rights and international humanitarian law.

77. Promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities was a top priority for the Government of Qatar. In May 2018, it had hosted the Third International Doha Conference entitled "Blind women are partners in building society and development." Youth, as leaders and the hope for the future, had also been the focus of State policies. In addition to receiving social services and health, they were encouraged to practise sports and offered job opportunities.

78. Challenges that impacted the structure of the family were being addressed. The National Committee of Human Rights had recorded 646 cases of inhumane, unilateral measures, most of which involved the separation of family members. The State of Qatar would continue its efforts to enhance social development through partnership agreements with the United Nations and international institutions, to pursue international cooperation and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

79. **Monsignor Grysa** (Observer for the Holy See) said that global poverty and inequality were a provocation that must be tackled with a firmer sense of collective responsibility and solidarity. A more holistic response was needed aimed at the integral development of the human person as well as the common good of all persons regardless of their geographical location or cultural identity.

80. The family was the bedrock of society, bringing up its children and providing the surest foundation for social stability and security. Governments must therefore increase their efforts to guarantee the right of the family to support and care. Social benefits must be accessible especially to low-income households. Without such benefits, many parents could not survive in the global economy, let alone give their children the time and care they needed to develop into mature and healthy adults. Families struggling to cope with older persons or persons with disabilities also needed support to enable those members to enjoy healthy, happy and fulfilling lives. When the family was vulnerable, all of society became vulnerable.

81. Investment in every young person was an investment in the society as a whole. Governments must invest in early childhood as well as higher education. Young people needed not just jobs but also opportunities to take on leadership roles and responsibilities if they were to become leaders in their own lives and in society. The synod of bishops dedicated to young people, which had just opened in the Vatican, was an expression of the pastoral care provided by the Catholic Church for youth.

82. Older persons and persons with disabilities were particularly prone to feelings of alienation and exclusion. Living together in a globalized world required a commitment to build bridges, maintain open dialogue and continue to encounter one another.

83. **Mr. Manolov** (Bulgaria), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young people had a crucial role to

play in attaining sustainable development and in shaping lasting peace and security through meaningful participation in development policies. The main priorities identified by 700 young Bulgarians who had participated in a recent nationwide survey were quality education and decent jobs. The skills gap was viewed as a major barrier to their transition from education to employment. Entrepreneurship could be a powerful tool for addressing those challenges and tackling the high levels of youth unemployment.

84. **Mr. Gochev** (Bulgaria), speaking as a youth delegate, said that entrepreneurship could equip young people with valuable skills such as critical thinking, decision-making, leadership, teamwork and problem-solving. It could be used to turn social challenges into solutions powered by innovation, to launch new careers that departed from the typical economic model and to foster positive community development. The international community and all interested parties could actively support the development of entrepreneurial competences in formal education systems and empower young people to be creators of quality jobs.

85. Bulgarian youth also highlighted other topics such as global environmental issues, improvement of health care and illegal substance abuse. Young people wished to engage in all policy areas that concerned them; they could do so with the support of Governments and financial and educational institutions.

86. **Mr. Washington** (Australia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that he wished to reflect on a few key ideas that had emerged during his nationwide listening tour across Australia. He had asked young Australians from diverse backgrounds for their views on what the country would look like if they had had a greater say. Young people must be viewed as participating members of society and it was a misconception to consider that they were waiting in the wings, yet to experience the real world. However, the issues young people had raised with him were relevant to all ages and among the many issues that the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development sought to address. He had spoken to culturally diverse young people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, members of the oldest continuing culture in the world and subject to enduring racial prejudice; young people who had experienced discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity; persons living with disabilities, and those who wanted safe and affordable housing, secure employment, a fair and equitable justice system, a healthy environment; an education system that encouraged young people to thrive; and better support for those suffering from substance abuse. The young people he met advocated for a kinder society, free from bullying and harassment.

87. Young people were clearly concerned about the well-being of their generation. Young Australians in educational institutions, community groups and juvenile detention centres considered mental health to be at a crisis point. They saw the interconnections between mental health and other community issues. The education system should emphasize the importance of mental health and support services should bear in mind the diversity of young people. Young people needed to feel valued. Their well-being impacted on the rest of the community and when they succeeded, everyone benefited.

88. As visionaries with nuanced solutions to offer, young people must be included in policymaking. Their potential must be embraced to help shape a better future for all. In short, if young people had a greater say in decision-making and setting the policy agenda, the world would be kinder, safer, healthier and more united.

89. **Mr. Mohamed** (Maldives) said that his country sought to ensure that populations in all 188 inhabited islands had access to social protection and services at affordable rates. It spent more than 9 per cent of GDP on the education sector, providing free primary and secondary schooling to all. The Maldives had achieved close to universal literacy rates, universal immunization and low infant-mortality and maternal-mortality rates. Diseases such as polio, measles, malaria and lymphatic filariasis had been eliminated, although various non-communicable diseases were emerging.

90. The Government had been providing free universal medical care for seven years. Mechanisms had been established to provide persons with disabilities with equal employment opportunities; a disability allowance had also been introduced. Older persons were receiving financial support through well-targeted policies. The Government remained committed to empowering young people to be active citizens and had adopted policies to support employment for women. The Employment Act of 2008 and the Gender Equality Act of 2016 provided for non-discrimination in employment and encouraged the economic empowerment of women.

91. The small size of the population and its dispersal over hundreds of small islands in a vast area of sea made the delivery of social protection services extremely expensive in the Maldives. Facilitating easier access to financing for small island developing States to enable them to implement social and economic development projects would help to reduce the international inequality identified by the Secretary-General.

92. **Ms. Choi** (Republic of Korea), speaking as a youth delegate, said that many young persons and marginalized people were unaware of the rights and freedoms they were entitled to under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They must be given full access to the relevant information to ensure that, in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda, they would not be left behind. The inclusion of young people through empowerment, education and participation in decision-making processes was crucial. She took pride in her country's commitment to building a more caring and inclusive society and in the existence of the Youth Participation Committee which enabled youth to propose policies and participate in decision-making in central government agencies and local authorities.

93. States and Governments should prioritize gender equality and gender-responsive policies, while non-governmental organizations should also play a role in addressing the gender gap in employment, work-life balance and the eradication of violence. A robust civil society was essential for sustainable development and social inclusion. In the Republic of Korea, civil society activism had played a central role in promoting human rights and democracy over the decades and had been instrumental in attaining the free, fair and egalitarian life that her country currently enjoyed.

94. The reaffirmation in September 2018 by the leaders of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of their commitment to end 70 years of hostilities and move towards peace was a historic event that resonated with the 9 million young people in her country who yearned for peace. Given the history of the Korean peninsula, peace could not be taken for granted. Yet, peace, freedom and prosperity were fundamental to the achievement of a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable future.

95. **Mr. Al Habib** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the common development goals of ending poverty in all its forms everywhere and ensuring healthy lives for all at all ages were universal, interlinked and needed to be addressed in unison. While States must adopt an appropriate mix of policies, the international community and development partners had the responsibility to support their efforts or at the very least to avoid imposing harmful measures that hindered achievement of those goals. The imposition of illegal and inhumane unilateral sanctions was a clear instance of such destructive and harmful practices. Those sanctions openly and indiscriminately targeted the daily life of ordinary citizens and were designed to undermine achievements in social development.

96. Iran was committed to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The new Comprehensive Law for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had been enacted in Iran in April 2018. Besides creating job opportunities for people with disabilities, the Government was providing health insurance and a monthly allowance to people with disabilities, while also allocating them 3 percent of job openings in the public sector.

97. Steps had been taken to ensure a work-family balance to enable parents to spend more quality time with their children. Women employees were entitled to 90 days of paid maternity leave while men employed in the government or public sector were also entitled to paternity leave. Iran would be hosting the 2018 Biennial Regional Conference on Ageing, at which participants would assess trends in population ageing and dynamics and review the response of communities and Governments across Asia. It recognized that a substantial number of young people and adults, especially women, had poor literacy skills and was taking steps to achieve universal literacy through lifelong learning.

98. In 2017, the Ministry of Education, in conjunction with the local offices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund, had organized an event aimed at achieving a breakthrough in reducing the number of out-of-school children in order to advance national education goals as stated in the Fundamental Reform Document of Education and the sixth Five-Year National Development Plan. Iran shared the view that education was vital for nurturing responsible and active stakeholders, capable of contributing effectively to peace and prosperity in their respective societies and beyond. However, unilateral coercive sanctions contributed to a significant erosion of human rights, particularly the right to education, in the countries on which such measures were imposed.

99. **Mr. Wattanayakorn** (Thailand), speaking as a youth delegate, said that his statement echoed the thoughts of young Thais who had shared their concerns and ideas on social development via an online platform. They emphasized three of the five "Ps" from the People's Agenda: people; planet and partnership. People, as the foundation of the society, should be empowered through quality education, which would enhance their lives and enable them to contribute to the society in a positive way. Education should not be just for the young. Governments should foster lifelong learning for the development of digital, health and legal literacy as well as skills development and training for

the labour market for people of all ages and without discrimination. With respect to the planet, environmental protection of natural resources on land, under water and in the air was crucial for future generations. Unbalanced development in the past had triggered a vicious cycle of degradation, climate change, hunger and poverty, and inequality and conflicts.

100. **Ms. Tawinboom** (Thailand), speaking as a youth delegate, said that a prime example of partnership was the successful rescue operation of the youth football team from Chiang Rai province in Thailand thanks to the incredible efforts of government and private sector experts as well as the media and individual volunteers from Thailand and around the world. That effort epitomized the spirit of humanity and dedication and was a source of inspiration to people all over the world.

101. Young people in Thailand hoped to build a culture of partnership and volunteerism at home and abroad. They believed that volunteerism could be a powerful and cross-cutting way of implementing the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, enhancing interaction between Governments and people for concrete and scalable actions and facilitating networking and broad partnerships.

102. **Mr. Porvaznik** (Slovakia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that without intergenerational trust, it would be impossible to move forward. Since his arrival at the United Nations, he had been disappointed to note that disposable plastic bags, food containers and cutlery were still being used at the Headquarters building at a time when the United Nations was the most prominent advocate of the Sustainable Development Goals and when ample proof existed of the harm that disposable plastic was causing to the environment. He had begun to question whether those Goals were really taken seriously. Trust and idealism were essential. The very existence of the United Nations, which brought together leaders from all around the world, was surely proof of idealism, as was the goal of achieving equal opportunities for every human being. Experienced leaders needed young people just as enthusiastic, energetic young people needed the experience and guidance of their elders and moral role models they could follow and believe in. Mutual trust and intergenerational dialogue were vital for making the world a better place for everyone. It was also necessary for combating extremism, apathy and all the inequalities and challenges faced by society.

103. He urged people, as they moved through the corridors of the United Nations Headquarters on their way from one event to another, to pause and contemplate the beauty of the pieces of art exhibited in the building and to reflect on their deeper meaning. Moreover, they should devote five minutes of their daily routine to visit the Meditation Room, where people could withdraw into themselves regardless of their faith or creed. The Room was also dedicated to all those who had died on United Nations missions, who had lived according to the ideals of the Organization and taken them seriously.

104. **Ms. Antonovičová** and **Mr. Plavec** (Czechia), speaking as youth delegates, said that Czech and Slovak youth had always been at the forefront of resistance and independence movements, advocating ideals of democracy and respect for human rights in 1939, 1968 and 1989. For those young people, self-determination, human rights and political participation were not just hollow terms but essential values for a stable, democratic society. The rigorous engagement of young people in public affairs and an inclusive high-quality education were prerequisites for a continually evolving, sustainable society. Young people in the Czech Republic were demanding a significant change in the educational system in favour of critical thinking and honest debate and the opportunity to learn relevant skills for their life and employment. They aspired to an inclusive educational system that did not unfairly discriminate.

105. The horizontal exchange of knowledge and of diverse experiences between young people from different social or other backgrounds was a precondition for an inclusive sustainable society where each individual could reach his or her potential. Young people should have the opportunity to take part in peer-to-peer mentoring, non-formal education or interactive youth-focused events. By openly discussing their projects and ideas with a peer who had experience in their field of interest they could make sure that such ideas were not lost. Well-rounded education and intergenerational dialogue would reduce inequalities in social capital.

106. Young Czechs were worried about lack of interest in local and national affairs. The opportunity to express their opinions in school parliaments, municipal boards and youth groups and councils would enable young people to become active citizens in public forums. Such efforts were crucial for the establishment of just democratic institutions and for addressing the adverse effects of globalization on peripheral areas.

107. **Ms. Elmarmuri.** (Libya) said that social development in her country still fell short of aspirations because of the difficult transition, lack of political security and stability, and resulting economic and financial difficulties. Nevertheless, within existing resources, the Government of the National Transitional Council had put in place economic programmes for

raising living standards and improving health and education services. Special attention was paid to persons with special needs and the vulnerable, mainly widows, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities. Libya had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

108. In coordination with the relevant United Nations agencies, it sought to lay the foundation of good governance based on security and the rule of law; develop a strategy for post-conflict involving the advancement of different sectors of the society; diversify the economy and promote human development without exclusion; and provide humanitarian assistance to those affected by the crisis.

109. The 2017–2020 strategy, which was being implemented in consultation with the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, comprised three priority areas: promoting accountable institutions; providing basic services and fostering social cohesion, conflict prevention and sustainable peace; and enhancing democratic governance, the rule of law and human-rights-based development for all. Income disparities between developed and developing countries negatively impacted economic development and efforts by the latter to end poverty. Hence those countries needed support in pursuing social development, mobilizing local resources and investing in infrastructure and service sectors.

110. National sovereignty must be respected along with human rights, including the right to development and good governance, in the context of the ethical, religious and cultural value system of the relevant country. Each country had the sovereign right to shoulder its responsibilities in its efforts to promote social and economic development.

111. **Mr. Kapambwe** (Zambia) said that poverty levels had remained high in Zambia owing to the steady decline in copper prices on the international market, the high birth rate and the heavy burden of HIV/AIDS, which continued to affect the economically productive segment of the population. His Government remained committed to improving the well-being of all Zambians, especially the most vulnerable members of the society, with a view to promoting human development and dignity for all. The Social Cash Transfer Scheme, Food Security Pack and Farmer Inputs Support Programme were among the specific social protection programmes targeting older persons, poor rural populations and other vulnerable groups.

112. The Government of Zambia remained committed to the promotion of workers' rights in the workplace, including the right to organize; to take part in collective bargaining; and to receive equal pay for work of equal value. The protection of workers' rights was critical to securing decent work. Every effort was made to ensure that laws governing rights in the workplace were fully enforced.

113. In a bid to address gender inequality at the secondary school level, financial support was being provided to girls under the Girls' Education and Women's Empowerment and Livelihood project and through the home-grown school feeding programme.

114. **Mr. Gréant** (Belgium), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the worldwide web, facetiming and high-speed trains seemed to be the height of connectedness. Yet many young people felt insecure, vulnerable and lonely. As one of the most important tools for empowering them, education could offer them safe spaces for exchanging and learning about each other's differences, promoting peace and opening their minds to the outside world. Quality education must help young people to find a place in society and prevent them becoming easy targets in conflict situations. Young people must be key actors in achieving change and sustainable peace. They were involved in armed conflicts as victims, instigators, in most cases against their will. In his country, although there was no armed conflict, young people witnessed other types of violence such as hate speech, intolerance, discrimination, psychological violence and extremism.

115. **Ms. Coghe** (Belgium), speaking as a youth delegate, said that in addition to receiving quality education, health care and other basic services, young people should be empowered through youth councils and mentor programmes and by alerting them to issues in their community. Regular consultations with youth should be held to better understand their needs and priorities. Moreover, they must stand up for their rights and assume their responsibilities. She and her colleague had the privilege of speaking before the Third Committee, but it was time for new decision-making practices in which children and young people had their fair share. Young people did not want to be represented; they wanted to be present. Lasting peace could only be envisaged when young people became equal partners in the prevention of conflict and the delivery of relief and recovery efforts. Resolutions should not be allowed to gather dust on the desks of decision makers. They should be handed out, passed on and disseminated.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations A/C.3/73/SR.4

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Seventy-third session

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Third Committee

Summary record of the 4th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 3 October 2017, at 3 p.m.

Chair:	Mr. Saikal	(Afghanistan)
later:	Mr. Kováčik (Vice-Chair)	(Slovakia)
later:	Mr. Saikal (Chair)	(Afghanistan)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 28: Social development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/73/214)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/73/61–E/2018/4, A/73/211 and A/73/211/Rev.1, A/73/213, A/73/220 and A/73/254)

(c) Literacy for life: shaping future agendas (*continued*) (A/73/292)

1. **Mr. Escalante Hasbún** (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), expressed sympathy to the Government of Indonesia in connection with the recent earthquake and tsunami. The States members of CELAC were committed to taking appropriate measures to ensure social development. They considered the eradication of hunger and poverty an ethical, social and economic imperative and called for renewed political and social commitment to the goal of equitable, inclusive, democratic, multi-ethnic and multicultural societies based on universal respect for all human rights. To that end, a number of them had instituted preferential treatment or participation quotas for marginalized and vulnerable groups.

2. The CELAC countries were deeply concerned by the uneven progress towards global income equality, the increase in wealth inequality, the continuing unacceptably high levels of extreme poverty and the persistence of non-income inequalities.

3. The necessary revitalization of the global partnership for development hinged on the participation of all countries in accordance with their capacities, the allocation of adequate financial and technical resources and the transfer of knowledge through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation. The States members of CELAC remained committed to promoting inclusive economic growth, social progress and sustainable development through national policies and programmes that had timetables and specific objectives and prioritized the poorest and most vulnerable. They urged national and international action to address inequalities in the distribution of services, resources and infrastructure and in access to food, health care, education and decent employment.

4. The CELAC countries were committed to improving access to education, training and employment for their many out-of-school and unemployed young people. They were also actively promoting the full social, political, economic and cultural integration of disabled persons, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. With respect to older persons, they urged the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing to consider the possibility of an international convention on their rights.

5. All States should establish universal social protection systems that took age, disability and gender into account. They should also address the specific needs and challenges of families, which played a key role in social development.

6. **Ms. Kuldmaa** (Estonia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that Member States should adopt specific strategies to encourage youth participation in social development policy-making. Furthermore, especially in a world of post-truth politics, it was necessary to ensure universal access to formal and informal education, regardless of socioeconomic status or disability. The Estonian youth delegates welcomed the Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative. Educated people made more sustainable, healthier decisions for themselves, their families and their communities.

7. **Mr. Rodrigo** (Sri Lanka) said that, to promote inclusive development, his country provided free technical and vocational training and offered career guidance and counselling at the national and district levels. It had also been a driving force behind the General Assembly resolution establishing World Youth Skills Day (A/RES/69/145). Sri Lanka had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2016 and had protected the disabled under a disabilities rights law since 1996. It had implemented a number of national action plans covering employment, accessibility, vocational training and rehabilitation for the disabled, and its National Human Rights Action Plan 2017–2021 aimed to further improve infrastructure-related accessibility and to boost disability rights awareness and enforcement.

8. **Ms. Iileka** (Namibia) said that her country had recently hosted the thirty-eighth summit of the Southern African Development Community under the theme "Promoting Infrastructure and Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development". With more than a third of the population between the ages of 16 and 35, Namibia must harness its young human capital in order to achieve sustainable development. Accordingly, it was prioritizing technical and vocational education and

training with a view to combating high youth unemployment and improving the match between skill supply and demand.

9. Over the past 10 years, Namibia had reduced poverty at one of the fastest rates in Africa. Social development expenditure, including old age and disability grants, represented a substantial portion of the national budget. To combat food insecurity, its successful pilot food bank programme had been extended from one to three regions. It was also developing guidelines to improve the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of various social protection programmes. In March, it had launched a fund aimed at providing collateral-free loans to small and medium-sized enterprises and informal sector operators. In closing, she called for collaborative efforts to improve the plight of the poor, which would benefit rich and poor alike.

10. **Ms. Čupić** (Serbia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the Serbian youth delegation welcomed the recent launch of the United Nations Youth 2030 strategy. Young people had a responsibility to address the challenges of climate change, terrorism, violent extremism and growing inequality through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

11. Serbia considered young people the single most powerful force for social change and was among a limited number of countries with a ministry of youth. It had enacted a law on youth and was implementing a national youth strategy for 2015–2025.

12. **Mr. Petrović** (Serbia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that his country provided support to outstanding young students through its Fund for Young Talents and had a programme to promote youth volunteerism. The city of Novi Sad had been awarded the title of European Youth Capital 2019.

13. The first priority of the United Nations Youth 2030 strategy was to promote youth engagement and participation. Partnership and cooperation among nations would enable young people to translate their ideas into action.

14. *Mr. Kováčik (Slovakia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

15. **Mr. Sanvisi** (Suriname), speaking as a youth delegate, said that social media had become the greatest communication tool of all time. However, it exposed young people to interpersonal violence, pornographic content and cyberbullying. It was necessary to raise awareness of the benefits and dangers of social media, especially among the young. His youth delegation would staunchly support all efforts in that area and welcomed the potential contribution of the new youth strategy.

16. **Mr. Biegman** (Suriname), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the growing incidence of woman-headed households had a negative impact on children. Boys did not have caring male role models, and girls did not have the confidence to set boundaries with men. As members of the National Youth Parliament, the youth delegates endeavoured to inspire boys and young men to balance body, mind and spirit and, through the national education programme, to respect their elders, their peers and authority. Quality education included social and emotional learning.

17. **Mr. Hendricks** (South Africa) said that, on the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela, his Government continued to be guided by the ideals for which he strove, placing social development at the centre of its policies. The number of beneficiaries of child support and old age grants would keep pace with the growth of the child and elderly populations, and it had arranged a number of events in celebration of the International Day of Older Persons in October. South Africa continued to make progress towards the goals of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, most recently through a comprehensive disaggregation of the national development plan to inform disability-inclusive planning and a study of the cost of disability to South African households. Access to health care, including reproductive health care, and other socio-economic rights were guaranteed in the Constitution. His Government recognized the important role of families and continued to engage with civil society through its National Family Service Forum.

18. **Mr. Thein** (Myanmar) said that his country's new youth policy created opportunities for young people to learn about innovation and emerging technologies. The State Counsellor, Aung San Suu Kyi, had been holding talks about peace with young people and had recently conducted discussions on literature with university students.

19. Although the elderly were traditionally cared for by relatives, Myanmar had launched a pension scheme for people aged 90 and above. It was also formulating a law on older persons with the assistance of local and international consultants, and home or community-based day-care centres provided care for more than three thousand older persons. Myanmar operated a wide range of social protection programmes for all ages.

20. As a party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Myanmar had made it part of domestic law in 2015. It was currently developing a strategic plan to improve the quality of life of the

disabled in the context of the third Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons. It operated institution-based programmes for people with disabilities and provided education and vocation training without discrimination. A sign language interpretation service and curriculum were available.

21. Myanmar was developing a modern education system and working to improve literacy. In September, it had signed a decent work country programme with the International Labour Organization.

22. **Mr. Poudyal** (Nepal) said that the least developed countries, particularly landlocked and island States, were more vulnerable to climate change, extremism, forced migration and food and energy crises. Nepal was a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural society. The participation and representation of disadvantaged groups and communities, including women, was guaranteed through a system of quotas for all elected offices and public-sector jobs.

23. Social justice and inclusive social development were at the heart of its plans, policies and programmes. It had made significant progress in poverty reduction and human development since 2000, and its current development plan was fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. While modest, its social protection floors provided a safety net for the elderly, the disabled and single women, and it offered scholarships to girls, disabled children and children in marginalized communities and remote areas. It was also implementing targeted programmes in backward communities. Despite the challenges of its mountain topography, Nepal was determined for provide technology access and quality skills training, education and health services for all.

24. **Mr. Konfourou** (Mali) said that his Government continued to give priority to combating poverty and optimizing the national solidarity system. It was close to instituting universal health care and had undertaken ambitious reforms aimed at encouraging a strong private sector capable of creating jobs for young people and others. It also attached great importance to promoting equity for youth and women. For example, 30 per cent of the members of the new Cabinet were women, in accordance with the gender equity law.

25. Social assistance took a variety of forms. Almost 6,000 social housing units would be made available to low- and middle-income households in 2018 alone, and close to 70,000 poor and food-insecure households had been receiving cash transfers as of the end of 2017. With respect to the disabled, the 2015–2024 strategic plan for disabled persons addressed social protection, health care, rehabilitation, education and decent work. To complement ongoing programmes, each year during Social Solidarity Month, government agencies, traditional and religious leaders, businesses and civil society organizations made an extra effort to help the country's most vulnerable people.

26. **Mr. Duruiheoma** (Nigeria) said that his Government was committed to improving the lives and well-being of all Nigerians, regardless of social status, creed or affiliation. Its N-Power programmes, which provided innovative training for young Nigerians, had already deployed more than 400,000 university graduates to key sectors and created jobs for more than 30,000 non-graduates; it would ultimately work in tandem with the planned innovation hubs. In accordance with its commitment to the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, Nigeria had recently enacted a law stipulating the establishment of a national senior citizens centre. Nigeria provided disabled persons with training in various vocations and encouraged businesses to reserve 2 per cent of vacancies for them.

27. The family — defined as a man, a woman, their children and their relatives — was the fundamental unit of Nigerian society, responsible for the care of young and old alike and for the education and socialization of children. Nigeria rejected any redefinition of the family and would work constructively with like-minded countries to uphold its sanctity.

28. **Mr. Bin Momen** (Bangladesh) said that his Government was working tirelessly to eradicate poverty through people-centred development plans and actions. Thanks to consistent investment in health, water, education and sanitation, Bangladesh had significantly reduced infant mortality and had increased life expectancy to more than 72 years. It operated 18,000 community and rural health centres and distributed 30 different medicines free of charge.

29. To achieve middle-income status by 2021, his Government was investing in human resources development, with a focus on youth development. Bangladesh had achieved 100 per cent primary enrolment some years previously and had increased literacy from 45 to almost 73 per cent in less than 10 years.

30. Volunteerism was critical for participatory development. To encourage it, Bangladesh provided youth organizations with financial support for volunteer activities. It also contributed to the United Nations Volunteers Special Voluntary Fund.

31. Bangladesh took a "whole of society" approach to social development, relying heavily on family-centred policies and programmes, which it would continue to

strengthen. It was also working to ensure respect for the rights of persons with disabilities by mainstreaming disability in its development policies and programmes. It was a co-organizer of annual the high-level events in observance of World Autism Awareness Day.

32. Bangladesh stressed the importance of effective enforcement of labour laws with regard to migrant workers and promoted safe, orderly and regular migration. It had participated actively in the deliberations leading to the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and had played an active role in negotiating the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration.

33. *Mr. Saikal (Afghanistan), Chair, resumed the Chair.*

34. **Mr. Molina Linares** (Guatemala) said that structural gaps constrained the development of middle-income countries. A social transformation approach was needed to grapple with complex, increasingly interrelated problems, including growing gender gaps, inequalities and poverty.

35. His delegation urged Member States to translate the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the disability-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets into concrete social development measures.

36. Many older persons lacked independent income, decent work and social security benefits or pensions, and their dependence on others made them vulnerable to violence. National and international efforts were needed to strengthen institutional capacities to ensure their fundamental freedoms and quality of life. The delegations should join forces to bring about an international instrument on the rights of older persons.

37. Although there had been significant progress on raising awareness of the importance of young people for sustainable development, formal recognition of their role had lagged. It was critical to invest in quality education and health care and to ensure significant, inclusive youth participation in policy-making.

38. **Mr. Barro** (Senegal) said that the eradication of poverty and the empowerment of vulnerable populations were closely linked and mutually reinforcing. Therefore, in the Emerging Senegal Plan, his Government emphasized the promotion of human capital. Senegal was pushing towards universal health care and had instituted a family security grants programme. Other notable initiatives included the Equal Opportunity Card, which gave disabled people access to special education, transport, employment and rehabilitation benefits; a national gender equity strategy, a national social protection initiative, a national child protection strategy, a national women's entrepreneurship strategy, a support programme for older persons and a literacy and vocational training programme targeting rural populations and women.

39. **Mr.** Youssouf Aden **Moussa** (Djibouti) said that social development was inextricably linked to economic growth and a driver of his Government's development policy. Its Vision Djibouti 2030 had guided the 2015–2019 national development plan, which aimed to ensure solid and diversified production bases, create jobs and income, reduce social inequalities, provide universal access to basic services, promote a better quality of life and protect the environment.

40. Djibouti had made tangible progress on improving the quality and geographic availability of health care in recent years. At the international level, it welcomed the global commitment to health demonstrated by the first high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the fight against tuberculosis and the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.

41. **Mr. Aitbaev** (Kyrgyzstan), speaking as a youth delegate, said that 14-to-30-year olds constituted 30 per cent of the Kyrgyz population. Since its independence, Kyrgyzstan had sought to establish the legal, socio-economic and organizational conditions for youth development and had recently approved a 2017–2020 programme for the development of youth policy. His Government was working to develop rural areas, where most young people lived, and had declared 2018 the Year of Regional Development. Its efforts were focused on assisting small and medium-sized enterprises, promoting the specialization of regional exports, improving transport, expanding access to and improving public services, developing a health care network, opening new schools, improving security and developing border-area infrastructure.

42. Kyrgyzstan sought to create more opportunities for young people to shape its future and was deploying all available resources to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In that context, he urged stronger international cooperation to boost youth employment, ensure modern, quality education, combat drug addiction, crime and poverty and promote social integration. Kyrgyzstan very much appreciated the assistance provided by the United Nations youth programmes, including the United Nations peacebuilding programme for youth, and would welcome projects targeting drug trafficking.

43. Noting the importance of strengthening intercultural dialogue, he drew attention to the ninetieth

anniversary of the birth of the writer Chinghiz Aitmatov, who had given voice to the Kyrgyz people, and to the third World Nomad Games, which had further strengthened intercultural understanding.

44. **Ms. Al Za'abi** (United Arab Emirates), speaking as a youth delegate, said that her country recognized the importance of youth participation in global decision-making and would work with the United Nations to promote youth issues across the world. It saw young people as the shapers of the future and spared no effort to provide the environment and resources they needed to assume their roles in society and valued them as leaders. The current Minister of State for Youth Affairs, appointed in 2016 at the age of 22, was the youngest government minister in the world. In 2016, the United Arab Emirates had launched a national youth agenda developed by and for young people.

45. **Mr. Al Braiki** (United Arab Emirates), speaking as a youth delegate, said that that his country had established various youth councils to give young men and women a voice and a means of action. He was a member of one such council, which had worked on initiatives to empower young people in the context of the 2030 Agenda and to provide them with an opportunity to advise decision makers on youth-related issues. In addition, under the Youth Circles initiative, more than 80 circles had already been hosted to promote dialogue between the Government and Emirati youth. In closing, he thanked the Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Youth for her contribution to expanding the Organization's youth engagement and advocacy efforts.

46. **Ms. Feryi** (Ethiopia) said that, given the priority nature of social integration and the eradication of extreme poverty, her Government's social development efforts were focused on equal opportunity in education, affordable health care and job creation. The National Social Protection Policy, which included a community-based health care scheme for informal-sector workers, was designed to create livelihoods and jobs, promote social insurance and increase access to social services and legal protection for the vulnerable. The national development plan incorporated the Sustainable Development Goals.

47. Ethiopia had taken steps to encourage the full participation of persons with disabilities and ensure them equal opportunities in all spheres. Because families were agents of development, it made family policies an integral part of its inclusive development approach. The national action plan on ageing was in line with the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, which had been translated into the federal working language.

48. Ethiopia considered youth volunteerism an important aspect of social development, and the number of young volunteers had increased significantly. Significant progress had been made in improving health as well as school enrolment and access. To combat unemployment, Ethiopia had set up a revolving fund to create jobs for young people and was working to promote the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises. It would also continue to establish industrial parks, which had proved a major source of employment.

49. **Mr. Adam** (Sudan) said that his country had developed a national poverty eradication strategy that addressed 17 key areas, including youth employment, literacy, and primary and higher education enrolment. To supplement the primary role of the family in the care of older relatives, the State had conducted studies and compiled statistics to identify the needs of older persons. It also provided comprehensive health care services to older persons and provided assistance to their caregivers. Sudan had also launched a family stability project to build strong families, which focused on raising awareness of the importance of the family and identifying and addressing issues that could undermine the stability of families with a view to bolstering their resilience in a changing world.

50. In 2015, Sudan had launched a decent work and economic empowerment strategy to promote the social integration of persons with disabilities and their employment in the public and private sectors. It also supported microfinancing initiatives and had established a national fund to address their needs. Sudan also reserved a portion of social housing for persons with disabilities and had launched programmes to facilitate their enrolment in academic and vocational training courses. All discrimination on the basis of disability was prohibited.

51. The social development goals and objectives set by the international community could not be achieved without closer cooperation among Member States. In particular, States must meet their commitments in the area of social development and establish effective partnerships to support efforts to build their national capacities. It was also critical to cancel all debts owed by developing countries, which continued to undermine their efforts to achieve comprehensive and sustainable development.

52. **Ms. Sentissi** (Morocco) said that there could be no "one size fits all" development strategy. Morocco took its commitments under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development very seriously. It was engaged in a vast, decades-long process of political, economic, social and religious reform aimed at strengthening democracy and

the rule of law, expanding freedoms and improving access to education, health care, employment and social protection. Thanks to a people-centred social development initiative launched in 2005 and entering its third phase, it was continuing to reduce poverty, marginalization and exclusion, as well economic disparities among regions. In keeping with the Kingdom's conviction that young people were drivers of development, they were included in forums, seminars and studies that would inform future planning.

53. **Ms. Horbachova** (Ukraine) said that her country was delivering on its social development commitments, thanks in part to strong economic growth due to macroeconomic stabilization, a healthier investment climate and the clean-up of the banking sector. Despite heavy security and defence expenses necessitated by foreign aggression, Ukraine had forged ahead with pension, education, health care and public administration reforms, as well as decentralization and fighting corruption, and it was implementing a national poverty reduction strategy. The education reform launched in 2017 aimed to create schools where students learned how to think and to apply their learning. With regard to women's human rights, Ukraine had recently adopted a national action plan implementing the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and a social programme on equal rights and opportunities for women and men to 2021.

54. In response to the humanitarian crisis in the Donbas region, Ukraine had increased its budget allocation for cash transfers to internally displaced persons more than six-fold. It had also adopted a comprehensive strategy for their integration.

55. **Ms. Zutter** (Luxembourg), speaking as a youth delegate, said that successful social development required a human rights-based approach and the participation of all development actors. Like the European Union, Luxembourg had institutionalized youth participation in political debates and decisions. However, worldwide, two out of three countries had no formal political mechanism for young people to express their views on national policy, even though it was they who would reap the consequences of policy decisions. The Luxembourg youth delegates urged Member States to establish institutions for actively including young voices in the political discourse.

56. **Mr. Winckel** (Luxembourg), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the Government of Luxembourg had recently presented a national sustainable development plan that identified 10 priority action areas, all of which had the support of Luxembourg youth. In a country where almost half of the population was foreign, education represented an essential tool for strengthening social cohesion and discouraging exclusion and discrimination. Furthermore, education laid the groundwork for participation in public life, employment on an equal footing and active citizenship. They urged Member States to make education a policy priority and to invest commensurately.

57. **Ms. Banaken Elel** (Cameroon) and that the report on implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/73/214) underscored the need for urgent action to reduce inequality in and among countries. Reducing national inequalities benefited rich and poor alike. Her country, whose inclusive development policy had brought steady economic growth since 2010, was a case in point.

58. Its efforts to reduce income inequality included a civil service recruitment programme targeting young people that had led to the creation of more than 250,000 public- and private-sector jobs; programmes targeting young members of the returning diaspora, poor urban youth, disabled persons, and vulnerable families; preferential loans for young people; social security payments for the elderly; job-creation and job-access policies; a 30 per cent increase in the minimum wage; equal wages for men and women and voluntary contribution to the national social insurance fund for informal-sector workers. In addition, Cameroon was implementing a social safety net project with the support of the World Bank. However, the impact of all of those efforts would be strengthened by international measures to reduce development disparities among States and by assistance in the design and implementation of a nationally appropriate social protection system.

59. **Ms. Zeggar** (France) said that the social inclusion of older persons was a critical challenge in the context of generally longer lifespans. In line with the statement by the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons that older persons should be seen as active contributors to society, a bill would be proposed in the legislature to ensure that more older people remained independent. Under a law in force since 2015, persons over age 60 could receive an autonomy allocation to make staying in their homes or living in an assisted living community more affordable.

60. **Mr. AlShatti** (Kuwait), pointing to the large differences in per capita gross national product among countries, urged the mobilization of efforts to leave no one behind. Since its founding, the State of Kuwait had financed more than 960 development projects, including 380 in the Arab world.

61. To empower young people economically, socially and politically, Kuwait had set up a national small and medium-sized enterprise fund which facilitated market entry for young entrepreneurs, thereby reducing youth unemployment. It had also established the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs and created a national youth council.

62. Kuwait had reduced adult illiteracy to 2.9 per cent and had eliminated child illiteracy. In view of the challenging nature of the disability-related Sustainable Development Goals, it encouraged the sharing of experiences. Furthermore, it called on all Member States to assume their responsibility to settle armed conflicts peacefully, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, because sustainable development could not be achieved in the presence of armed conflict.

63. **Mr. Mikayilli** (Azerbaijan) said that, for the past 10 years, Azerbaijan had been one of the world's fastest growing economies. It had translated its success into improved socioeconomic conditions for all, reducing both the poverty and the unemployment rate to 5 per cent. Three thousand schools and 600 hospitals and health centres had been built, together with social housing for low-income families. Public spending on agricultural and rural activities had risen, preferential loans were available to entrepreneurs, and new industrial parks were being opened.

64. With one of the youngest populations in Eastern Europe, Azerbaijan emphasized quality education and decent employment for young people. The Ministry of Youth and Sport and the President's Youth Foundation provided financial support for domestic and international youth projects. Azerbaijan's national volunteer programme placed strong emphasis on young people. The Government had also taken steps to strengthen social protection for older persons, including by providing in-home services to more than 12,000 older persons who lived alone or were disabled.

65. **Ms. Mönöko** (Lesotho) said that her country had given women full land rights and reserved one third of seats in local councils for women. Its national poverty reduction strategy targeted youth development, which was coordinated under a national youth policy. Primary education was free and compulsory, and the State provided support for students enrolled in public vocational training centres.

66. **Ms. Goliatha** (Central African Republic) said that the ongoing armed conflict had brought about the collapse of the Central African economy. Violence had caused massive population displacements, closed schools and impeded health care. Together with economic tensions, it also interfered with the functioning of the judicial system and financial services. The Government recognized the need to enable the Special Criminal Court to pursue its investigations, to halt the illegal exploitation of the country's resources and to collect and manage tax revenues, and it was gradually retaking territory and re-establishing basic social services. With the support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the international community, it hoped that its efforts would prevail.

67. **Mr. Hermida Castillo** (Nicaragua) said that the United Nations needed to play a more active and coordinated role in combating the intimidation tactics used by powerful States against developing countries, which undermined international relations, peace and development. His Government reaffirmed its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals and would continue to work tirelessly to achieve them. The family was the cornerstone of its development policy, and its social programmes in support of the family had helped to reduce poverty and extreme poverty by half since 2009. Production and quality of life had improved, and the State had established the right to recreation. Older persons were entitled to a pension and were cared for by their families in the context of a culture of solidary and support. Nicaragua would continue its programme of land redistribution and had set targets for water and sanitation, telecommunications, health, environmental issues, job creation, education and housing.

68. **Ms. Larrabee** (Observer for the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)), expressing sympathy to the Government and people of Indonesia in connection with the 28 September earthquake and tsunami, said that some 200 volunteers and staff from the Indonesian Red Cross Society had already been deployed to the area. While IFRC was currently responding to 36 emergencies or protracted crises worldwide, a large part of its efforts focused on helping communities prevent or prepare for such events. Its emphasis on support for and with the most vulnerable accorded with the inclusive vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

69. IFRC relied heavily on the contributions of an estimated 12 million volunteer first responders, who faced increasingly complex, prolonged and dangerous crises. They were younger and more urban than in the past, with different expectations and skills. In that context, it particularly welcomed the report on the plan of action to integrate volunteering into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which drew attention to the need for more research on the impact and needs of

volunteers and emphasized their safety and security. In view of the urgent need for a better understanding the contributions and needs of volunteers, IFRC would help to organize the 2020 global technical meeting on volunteering, which she encouraged Member States to support.

70. IFRC welcomed the Committee's growing attention to the challenges faced by people with disabilities and its 2018 focus on disasters and emergencies. Disabled people were often left behind in an emergency, and the emergency itself could cause or compound disabilities. According to World Health Organization estimates 1 in 4 refugees had a disability.

71. As the co-lead of the Global Shelter Cluster, IFRC had worked with other organizations to develop international guidelines on the inclusion of older and disabled people in humanitarian situations, and earlier that year, the Age and Disability Consortium, of which it was a member, had published a guide for embedding the inclusion of older and disabled people in humanitarian policies and practice. In addition, through its partnership with the Special Olympics, 11 national societies had trained and certified 200 Special Olympics athletes as first responders.

72. **Mr. Chekeche** (Zimbabwe) said that his country's commitment to social development was embodied in the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation. Most recently, it had launched Zimbabwe Women's Microfinance Bank and its first youth-centric bank, Empower Bank. Young people also had access to vocational and empowerment training, provided with the support of the private sector. Zimbabwe's youth policies were in line with the African Youth Charter and international policies, and youth development and empowerment had been mainstreamed across the line ministries.

73. Zimbabwe had long invested heavily in education, including by providing stipends for poor and vulnerable children; as a result, it had one of the highest literacy rates in Africa. It also invested heavily in health, with various assistance programmes for vulnerable populations. The civil service was the largest employer of persons with disabilities.

74. **Mr. Shulgin** (Russian Federation), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Ukrainian delegation had once again blamed problems in the social development sphere on fictitious external aggression, when they were clearly the result of an unconstitutional coup and the ensuing civil war. One of the weapons of that war was an economic blockade of southeast Ukraine, which harmed the very people about whom it purported to be so concerned.

75. **Mr. Yaremenko** (Ukraine) said that repeating the same lie over and over did not make it true. The Russian Federation had invaded Ukraine on 20 February 2014, and it continued to control, arm and provide financial assistance to the region under its control. In 2014, the President and members of Parliament had come to power through legitimate elections. Thus, the Russian representative's claim of a coup and ensuing civil war was unfounded. Lying was dangerous, because a liar was not believed, even when he spoke the truth.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.